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THE
POLITICS OF CHRISTIANITY.

REPRINTED FROM THE NONCONFORMIST,
1847—1848.

BY
EDWARD MIALL.

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PREFACE.

THE papers which make up this volume were written in 1847-8, and were then published in the journal which the writer has conducted for several years. From time to time, several requests have been made that they should be placed before the public in a separate and connected form, but have not been complied with. Lately, however, an application reached the writer under circumstances which made it difficult to withhold his consent—and hence the publication of this little book.

Having acceded to the request that this series of short papers should be re-printed, the writer had to determine whether to translate them out of the editorial style, or to let them retain their original form. The latter alternative was decided upon, not as a matter of taste, but as a matter of convenience. So much reconstruction would have been involved in converting newspaper articles into essays, that to have been satisfactorily done they must have been re-written

—a task which would have largely intrenched upon other, and, in the writer's opinion, more important work. He has merely struck out from them, therefore, a few allusions which derived their whole significance from events then passing, leaving the papers in all other respects just as they were. Two of them on War were elicited by the correspondence of objectors. They might have been omitted altogether, but as they deal with objections likely enough to occur to many minds, it has been deemed preferable, on the whole, to let them keep their place.

The present are not times in which the British public evinces much anxiety to fashion its political opinions upon religious principles. Christianity, no doubt, by its silent and unobserved working in the minds of men, exercises considerable influence in the formation of such opinions, but it can hardly be said to be received as an authoritative standard in political affairs. It is questionable whether the nation gains anything to speak of by discarding the deepest of all truths from the province of Government. It is curious, too, that precisely that portion of the public which would sneer at the notion of founding their politics upon the principles of the New Testament, insist upon

the necessity of giving effect to the religion of the New Testament by political agencies and arrangements. The spiritual must not pretend to govern the political, but, in all its external affairs, must be governed by it—a rather startling inversion of the natural order of things. The papers comprised in this volume were written to suggest that the natural order of things may, after all, have something not entirely unreasonable said in its behalf. The writer may have fallen very far short of his purpose—but if his failure points the way to others far better qualified than he to follow it to the end, he will regard the result as ample compensation for his labour. Of one thing he is fully convinced—that the more studiously this country conforms its politics to the great ethical principles to be found in the Christian revelation, the more satisfactorily will its public affairs be conducted.

18, BOUVERIE STREET,

APRIL 29, 1863.

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The Politics of Christianity.

No. I.

NEGLECTED WORTH.

UNDERNEATH the surface of Christianity—altogether out of the sight of those whose search has not been pushed beneath the letter—not to be got at without laborious and well-directed thought, there lie, in richest abundance, veins of practical wisdom applicable to all the serious purposes of life, and capable of being turned to account in all the departments of human conduct. Great is the mistake of those who fancy that revealed truth casts light upon man, upon his powers, his rights, his relationships, and his duties, only in that aspect of his being which looks towards eternity. That, no doubt, is the main object for which it was given—but in accomplishing its chief end, it could hardly, in the nature of things, fail of securing many that are secondary only and incidental. Tell us the grand secret of the Divine administration as it

affects our race, and you tell us, by implication, all the lesser secrets which have relation to its government. Show us what man is, what position he holds, and what he is meant to be,—show us this upon authority which cannot be impeached, and you put us in possession of materials which, fairly applied, will lead to the discovery of every principle by which he may most successfully be managed. Hence, reason would teach us to look into Christianity for the germ of every human right, the primitive elements of every human obligation. That field, so glorious to look upon, overlies many a hidden treasure—and, until our philosophy has learned to dig into its bowels for the ore of truth not a little of the substantial worth of Christianity will remain neglected, because unknown.

There are men, we know, and those, we fear, not a few, who regard religion and politics much as Englishmen, in days happily gone by, were taught to look upon their neighbours across the straits, as “natural enemies.” A temporary and hollow truce between them is the largest extent of agreement they can tolerate. Christian principles carried into the domain of civil government by Christian men, they treat as a blunder closely bordering upon crime—a rash and unwarranted adventure at best, which, in most cases, is meetly punished by a loss of spirituality and a shipwreck of character. “Touch not, taste not, handle not,” is the pith of their

advice in reference to all political movements. And worldly statesmen, wise in their generation, have heartily echoed back the cry. The maxims by which they are governed, the devices to which they resort, the ends they propose, must needs, in order to pass muster, be referred to any standard rather than that furnished by revelation. No doctrine could more exactly suit their purposes than that which releases them from the necessity of harmonising their proceedings with the claims of divine truth.

Strip this notion of the cant and conventionalism in which it is commonly dressed, and you have before you one of the ugliest absurdities to which intelligent minds have at any time done homage. What is it but this? That the love of God and man which Christianity begets in the heart shall exert no moral influence over the course of civil government—that true religion which exalts and helps and cleanses human conduct in every other sphere, which sweetens all social relationships and regulates all earthly responsibilities must leave the department of magistracy untouched—that the citizen must lay by his piety in order to the discharge of his political duties, and either vacate the position assigned to him by Providence, and renounce its obligations, or by a kind of spiritual Mesmerism, put his religious principles to sleep. This is what the doctrine means if it means anything. On behalf, then,

of politics—on behalf of the numberless myriads whose interests are vitally affected by political causes—and on behalf of that embodiment of Christianity which we call “The Church,” whose position for good has been so often and so seriously interfered with by the “powers that be,” we call upon every man whose good sense has not been drugged by this mischievous absurdity to lend a helping hand in stifling it once for all. What is there, we ask, in the realm of politics that this stupid dogma should be allowed to girdle its borders and prevent the entrance therein of heaven-born truth? Has it been the common refuge of intellectual and moral prostitution? The greater is the need, the fuller the scope, for the beneficent working of genuine Christian life. {common-down-dogma}

But the divorce of politics from religion has been even more baneful in its effects than absurd in its nature. We claim the attention of the serious of all denominations to the facts of the case. We ask, whether Christian truth, as exhibited in the pulpit and the press, has established any powerful hold upon the masses. Is it not too clear, that the vast majority of the industrious poor are strangely indifferent, if not secretly opposed, to it? The natural taste of human nature for the humbling doctrines of the gospel does not explain this melancholy fact—for that distaste is equally decided, and quite as operative, in the middle walks of life as in the lowest. Nay, more! other

things being equal, it has been ordinarily found, that as "to the poor the gospel is preached," so among the poor it has the warmest welcome. How comes it that, in this country, general experience is reversed, and that the class least open to worldly seductions is also least disposed to spiritual things. The phenomenon cannot be said to have its origin in any general law—for in the West Indies the slave class, prior to emancipation, the hard-worked labourer subsequently, constituted the most religious portion of the community. We suspect that in Great Britain, Christianity has failed in securing the respect of our industrial population because, the phases in which the Church has set it forth have not been such as might serve to indicate a kindly interest in the rights and the liberties of the oppressed and down-trodden many. Religious profession has stood by in silence whilst men in power selfishly spoiled the people—and, instead of rebuking oppression, sided with the oppressors. That divine maxim, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," was never practically embodied in the laws affecting the masses—and, unhappily, the representatives of evangelical light and love have never been earnest in their advocacy of social justice. The consequence is what we have stated, that the general body of the working classes have conceived an aversion for revealed truth.

The contrast, in reference to religious knowledge and habits presented by the West Indian peasantry to that of our own country suggests the immense importance of making men understand the bearing which Christianity has upon their social and civil rights. Had the working people in Great Britain been wont to hear at the lips of the pious some defence of their rights—had they witnessed in political arrangements a genuine working out of the benign principles of God's truth—had they been taught to believe that injustice perpetrated upon them could look for no sanction from the living exponents of revelation—in a word, had they seen in evangelical communities of whatever name a readiness to sympathise with weakness rather than strength, to elevate the depressed, to notice the forsaken, to mete out equity to the wronged, and minister encouragement to the humble and the downcast, Christianity would have had its stronghold in their respect and affections, instead of being, as now, looked at askance as a deceiver. The severance of politics and religion, so unnatural in itself, has induced the rejection of religion by the myriads whose interests political exclusiveness has betrayed and well-nigh ruined.

May we, then, request an attentive and candid hearing whilst discoursing, in a few successive papers on "The Politics of Christianity?" The subject, to

our thinking, is one of profound interest and incalculable importance. Our method of dealing with it may prove ineffective—but we do hope, before we have done, to leave an abiding impression upon the minds of our readers, that Christianity has a right to prescribe in the world of politics—that it does prescribe in its own inimitable manner—and that the surest way to national greatness and prosperity is to follow its prescriptions with implicit confidence.

No. II.

LEAVEN.

WHEN we said that Christianity prescribes in relation to politics, aware how liable the expression was to the exceptions of mere textualists, we added, "in its own inimitable manner." A word or two respecting this manner—a few thoughts suggestive of the kind of process by which spiritual truth enters into, pervades, and assimilates whatever affects our social well-being, will be the most natural, and, therefore, most fitting introduction to the work we have undertaken. The edifice we are about to survey cannot well be approached but through this avenue.

Let no man, then, look into the New Testament, the statute-book of Christianity, for "a model constitution"—he might as well search the open volume of Nature for the original type and pattern of every flower that blows. It is man's fashion, not God's, to construct a complicated framework for the purpose of setting forth what his idea will come to, if it will but work. The creature makes laws *for* things—the Creator puts laws *into* them. In human contrivances,

the form is provided for the power—in Divine, the power invariably develops the form. We have our “Manuals”—our theories—our systems—our ingenious and elaborate paper plans of what ought to be—our checks and balances, provisions and prohibitions, charters and declarations of right—all marking out with minute distinctness, after the fashion of our respective judgments, the channels in which life of any sort may conveniently run. God does far otherwise. In His book we hunt in vain for any traces of a normal State, or family, or even Church. The outward shape—the visible manifestations which a given principle shall assume is left as though unheeded—as a matter of very inferior moment. But He plants in the heart of society a living truth—hides in the meal a small quantity of leaven—quicken, beneath a mass of corruption, an indestructible and expansive principle—and gradually, silently, but surely, the truth puts forth blade, stalk, and ear—the leaven “leaveneth the whole lump”—the principle attracts towards and assimilates to itself the most untoward elements with which it comes in contact.

Few errors, perhaps, have bred more mischief than that which mistakes the New Testament for a Handbook for the Conscience—a compendious Directory in which are to be found correctly mapped out all the numberless varieties of human obligation. It was

never intended to instruct man specifically in what he is *to do*—it insists chiefly, and most earnestly upon what he is *to be*. It is not, even in this respect, a code of perceptive regulations—but an agency to bring about its own glorious ends. It is a history of facts embodying one moral—Love—pure, unselfish, constant, self-sacrificing, unquenchable love—and this history, with its doctrinal illustrations, is presented to human nature with a view to awaken a faint but distinct echo—a response like unto itself. Kindle that central fire, and by the light of it all human duty may be clearly read. The child, the friend, the father, the master, the citizen, the magistrate, the senator—man in any earthly relationship may ask guidance at the oracle of a truly loving heart, and obtain the counsel that he needs. And if the dim and scarcely visible image of Love, thus photographed upon man's being, needs but a glimpse at it, to set him right as to his social relationships and to rouse within him an instinctive sense of the duties arising out of them, surely a reverent contemplation of the original type of that image, undistorted by any of the defects and accidents, which through the imperfection of the material on which it is impressed necessarily disfigure the copy, must needs do all that can be wished to rectify misapprehension, to enlighten ignorance, to remove prejudice, and to qualify him, in all his associa-

tions with his fellow-man, both to discover and to discharge its appropriate obligations. Truth breathing love, once seen, can never be forgotten. Thenceforth, all other things are seen in the light of her benignant smile.

The clearest and most impressive idea, perhaps, of the insinuating, penetrating, assimilating energy of the Christian system is to be gained from its own history. It begins its career in one of the obscurest corners and under the lowliest worldly auspices which this earth could well assign to it. Surrounding it on every hand may be seen various forms of social wrong, some of them hoary with age, many of them gigantic in stature. Without heeding them, without specifically denouncing them, without any show of plan or purpose in regard to them, it communicates from individual to individual, from soul to soul, its own purity and benevolence of spirit. One by one, silently, gradually, surely, ancient embodiments of injustice decay and die. This age sees one amelioration accomplished for humanity—that, another. As the world becomes more and more deeply imbued with Divine truth, the evil of practices long sanctioned by society becomes first dimly apparent, then gross and palpable, at last too hideous to be borne. The degradation of woman, the persecution of religious faith, slavery in all its forms, war under whatever pretence,

have either disappeared, or are fast disappearing, before the benignant influence of the religion of Jesus. We hear not the clatter of destruction—the noise of axes and hammers. The process as it goes forward attracts no great notice—but the “leaven” is at work—atom is imparting to atom its own activity—what is unalterably repellant of the gentle but efficacious influence is being extruded—what is susceptible of modification is being changed. Human nature in all its developments—individual, domestic, social, political, international—under the power of simple Christian truth, is throwing out upon the surface, ultimately to throw off altogether, its vicious humours—and the selfishness of man, driven by a living principle of love, first into sight, then into extinction, will cease at some future period to shelter itself behind the political institutions of the age.

All men who believe in Christianity, believe this—all who reason at all must see that these effects are consequent upon this cause. Something, then, there must be in this cause naturally and inevitably tending to such results. Were it not well for us to know it? Might not the work be greatly helped forward thereby? Civil Governments are in the main nothing more than certain organizations of natural opinion, and change in their forms, habits, and spirit, as that changes. Political ameliorations commence with the

enlightenment of individual minds. Some devout worshipper, with a question in his heart, goes to the oracle, and waits, and listens, until a clear response is obtained. He tells the newly discovered truth to others. It gains credence. It spreads. It establishes itself as a conviction in the public conscience. At length, it puts down all opposition, and ascends the throne to sway the decisions of men thenceforth for ever.

“The leaven leaveneth the lump.” The object we have in view in the articles that are to follow is to ascertain from the generic nature of the “leaven” what ought to be, and will be eventually, the character of the “lump.” The study, if rightly pursued, may conduce to many useful ends. It will save us from serious practical mistakes. It will give a proper direction to our enterprise and energies. It will do more. It will exhibit the loveliness of Christianity in novel and striking aspects, and it will open up to her disciples another and wider sphere of activity and influence than that to which they now almost exclusively confine themselves.

Reader, can aught but good result from taking politics within the circle of God’s truth, and calmly surveying them under the light from heaven? Purifying and strengthening, like the king of birds, our eye-sight at the orb of day, may we not be better able

to discern good and evil, now strangely intermingled, in the forms of civil government with which we are familiar? We think we may. Come with us, then, to the contemplation of those original, elemental, active, all-assimilating principles which contain within them the germ of every blessed change in which this world is destined to rejoice! Come, converse with Justice in its inner sanctuary—with Benevolence in its birthplace and its home! Subject or ruler, citizen or statesman, your notions of political right, privilege, power, and duty, will lose nothing either of breadth or depth, or integrity, by being submitted to the test of divine revelation.

No. III.

PRIMARY OBJECT OF GOVERNMENT.

“He is the minister of God to thee for good.”

EVERY one must have heard the anecdote told by Lord John Russell in his “History of Europe,” in which a random shot of genuine English wit, hit with such admirable effect the greediness of those swarms of German cousins who pestered the British court in the earlier days of the House of Hanover. The royal carriage containing the queen and her favorite duchess, was surrounded by a mob, who vented execrations more hearty than polite upon foreign favourites. The duchess, herself a German, somewhat frightened by the harsh tone of the popular voice, put her head with its finery out of the carriage window, and said in broken English,—“Good people! what for are you angry? we come here for your goods.” “Aye!” shouted a bystander with an oath, “and for our chattels too.”

Civil governments have been very prone, in all times and all countries, to misread, in a like manner, the main object of their mission. The “good” of their

subjects they have too commonly interpreted "goods." Their history presents us with the sublime of human depravity—bearing much the same relation to the ordinary wickedness of man, as mountain-ranges to the level earth. Ought this to excite our wonder? Place at the disposal of a will naturally selfish and corrupt, an organised machinery of power—no matter for what purpose—and you may fairly expect the engine to be used fully as often for the private ends of those who work it, as for the advantage of the public for whom it was originally put together. There is nothing which man is so certain of turning to ill account as delegated power. Almost invariably, his pride cancels the primary conditions of the compact made with him, and claims as a right, vested solely in himself, what he ought to hold as a trust derived from the consent of others—and then, his selfishness, availing itself of the vast system of means at command, seeks indulgence for itself rather than benefit for the public. Hence, history which embodies the deeds, not so much of peoples, as of governments, is but a continuous record of violence, fraud, and licentiousness on a gigantic scale.

But the common character and practices of civil government, as, for the most part, it has been and still is, must not be taken as the true setting forth of its original meaning. Born of that necessity which

was the daughter of the curse, its real mission was to bless mankind. The divine purpose stamped upon its brow is "good," the good of the race—and human perversity has not been able wholly to make void the benign intent. The worst of governments is better than the absence of all government—the most grinding of State tyrannies, than the lawlessness of private and individual revenge. If injustice we *must* have—and the condition of human nature laughs at our hope of escaping it altogether—let us have it in a few huge masses rather than in countless millions of atoms. The avalanche is less to be dreaded than the sand-storm of the desert. With all the mischief it has done, civil government has yet rendered society a possible thing—and out of the soil which this possibility has fenced off have sprung nearly all the causes as well as proofs of social progress. The institution must have been powerfully effective for good, which no amount of evil incident to the bad working of it has hitherto been able to destroy. But for the vitality which it possesses, in common with every other law of Providence, it could not have stood the wear and tear to which man's depravity has uniformly subjected it.

Besides, however, the direct sensible good which civil government is meant to secure, Christianity, we think, teaches us to look into it for a yet deeper significance. As "an ordinance of God," we are un-

questionably warranted in including it, and assigning to it, moreover, a foremost place, in that vast and widely adjusted system of means, which the Highest himself contrived for the moral education of our race. We have powers, springs of emotion, sources of purest enjoyment, which voluntary obedience to law—the law of truth and love—alone can unseal. The great end of our being is intelligent and cheerful submission to government. The purest, the most refined, and the most enduring happiness of which we are capable, is inseparably connected with being and doing what the supreme Ruler would have us to be and to do. May there not be a necessity, then, for some such institution as civil government, to waken up our first notions of the relationship we sustain to authority as such, and to give daily exercise to those feelings which it was designed to excite? Could we have grasped, or duly appreciated the idea of moral government, so far as to choose submission to it as our worthiest end, but for the rudiments of knowledge we have gained from early familiarity with forms of earthly rule? Are not the several modes in which public authority is brought to bear upon us here, the A B C of moral instruction? the rude types which illustrate to our unskilled thoughts subjects which, but for them, we could not have understood? picture-lessons, often miserably executed, for the child-

hood of humanity, to help us to our first conceptions of a spiritual and universal magistracy? Very much of God's message to man would be unintelligible to us, but for the accompanying prints furnished to us by Providence—and amongst them, civil government is, assuredly, not the least suggestive.

If, then, we consult the "oracle" as to the general object of civil rule, the answer is "Good—the good of the governed—direct and temporally as the maintenance of public order—indirect and lasting in the shadowing forth of something higher than itself, and in giving exercise to the nobler susceptibilities of our common nature." The necessity for civil government arises out of evil—government itself is an instrument for good. Selfishness may misapply it—pride may abuse it—but it nevertheless bears upon it the seal of the All-wise; and, like all institutions which come from His hand, embodies a truly beneficent purpose.

The obviousness of the foregoing remarks should not be allowed to turn us aside from the practical conclusions which they will be found to contain. If the general object of civil government be such as we stated, upon the authority of revealed truth, what a huge bundle of measures, which the politicians of the day flatter their craft by calling statesmanlike, must be rejected as having no relation whatever to the main end of State rule! Submitted to this simple

but searching test, how glaringly do they display their baseness! To set on fire the worst passions of the many, with a view to gratify the ambition of the few—to quarter high-born idleness upon industry, and dignify it with glorious titles—to raise large revenues without exciting discontent, and invent pretexts for the distribution of them under the semblance of wages—to wrap up in mystery what, if seen in its own light, common honesty would condemn—to prop up injustice by plausible devices, and, in place of removing it, to suppress its too piercing utterance in the public ear—to put new fences round exclusive privileges and class interests, even where experience has proved them to be widely pernicious—such seems to have been the great business of government, according to the judgment of men in power. But if the civil magistrate was designed to be “the minister of God for good,” to each and all of His subjects, it is clear that in following the course we have ventured to describe, he is applying his authority in methods repudiated by Christianity, and abusing the trust reposed in him to ends not sanctioned by his commission.

This view of the subject may help to clear the path of duty for religious men. Government is an ordinance of God—and they justly esteem themselves bound to submit to it. But He who appointed the means, appointed also the end for which they should exist. Neg-

lect of that end is the infraction and perversion of a solemn trust—the substitution of another end is a misappropriation of power to purposes never intended. In the name of Christianity, all good men are bound to remonstrate against flagrant violations of a divine ordinance. They cannot be silent and remain faithful.

Lastly, Christianity lends its sanction to civil government, only as it ministers “good” to the subject—none, therefore, have a right to identify political injustice, or state oppression, with the religion of Jesus. So far as it is of God, it is beneficent—where otherwise, it is to be ascribed to man. “The powers that be” are divinely commanded to bless mankind—when they curse, it is of their own corrupt hearts. The authority for doing so is not derived from heaven—the assumption of it for such a purpose has no warrant from God’s word. Governments cannot do their subjects wrong without going beyond their commission. In this sense we may quote, as applicable to the civil magistrate, the language of inspired writ, “He that is born of God cannot sin.”

No. IV.

FOR ALL AND EACH.

IN our last paper we learnt the view taken by Christianity of the general OBJECT of civil government—a ministration for GOOD. This we may look upon as a description applying to essential quality only—leaving everything special wholly out of sight. We have the stuff—the raw material of which the fabric, if a genuine one, will be exclusively wrought—the precise texture, shape, colour, and uses of it, are still to be determined. Good, to whom—good, in what form, and by what means—good, with what necessary limitations—these questions come next in order. We proceed, therefore, to examine them, one by one, in the light of God's revelation.

And, first, for whom is the good aimed at by civil government, manifestly designed? Here is a letter, the main purport of which we know to be pleasing—to whom is it addressed?

Look at that bright and blazing sun—image of his Creator's glory—image too, and in this respect most to be admired, of His universal and impartial bene-

ficence! See how he bathes in light the mountain tops, or gilds the clouds in which they wrap at times their hoary heads! But these uplifted spots, although the first to catch, and the last to lose, the benefits of his presence, rejoice only in their share of blessings common to all other parts of the earth's surface. The open champaign basks in his beams—the sequestered dell catches between its leafy locks glimpses of his countenance—ocean upon whom time sets no mark reflects his radiance—and every polished pebble of the countless myriads which lie scattered upon its beach, sparkles in the glow of his noon-tide effulgence. Forth walks royalty to greet him with gladness; and forth, too, from dingy courts, and through narrow casements, obscure and pining sickness glances heartfelt homage, blessing him that his favours are not withheld from the poor. The sailor, after a tempestuous night—the labourer trudging forth to his daily toil—the lone traveller whose short rest has been taken under the friendly shelter of a jutting crag—the wealthy citizen, after wooing sleep upon a bed of luxury—all classes, all ages, all individuals, at home or abroad, ill or in health, destitute or possessed of abundance, worthless or virtuous, mournful or merry—all participate, to the full extent of their capacity, in the advantages conferred on man with such unsparing liberality by the bounteous and joy-inspiring orb of day.

Now turn and contemplate Christianity, the luminary of the moral world—in its design, adaptation, and powers, equally diffusive with its physical prototype, although in its actual results, not as yet equally enjoyed, because its benefits, owing to their high superiority of nature, can only be received and distributed by human choice. It restricts its blessings to no class, nor tribe, nor nation, nor variety of our fallen race. All may go out into the light of it, and sun their understandings and their hearts in its life-giving beams. It is not only for all, but for each—is full fraught with gladness, not merely to our national and social, but to our individual, modes of being. No man can say with truth, “It means no good to me.” Set aside all the indirect advantages which its introduction to the world has brought, or is rapidly bringing, home to every man’s door—its chastening influence upon manners by the stimulus it has ministered to the development of moral consciousness—its assiduous and successful cultivation of the nobler and more generous impulses of our nature—its gradual elevation of mind to pursuits above the range of the animal senses—its encouragement of peace, and good-will—the quickening energy it has communicated to intellect, to which we are so largely indebted for the growth of science, and for the application of it to purposes of every-day wants and enjoyments—passing over all these things,

in the benefit to be derived from which there are few, indeed, who do not more or less share, you may yet, if so minded, discover in Christianity, an aptitude to distribute individually, to each separate member of the human family, its inexhaustible resources. Which of our mental or moral powers does it not prompt to activity? What craving of our nature does it fail to meet and satisfy? To what motive of the heart has it not addressed its appeals? What variety of wretchedness can be found to which it offers not some alleviation? Where is the passion so strong that it cannot master and subdue it? Where, the habit of vice so deep-rooted that it cannot grapple with, and tear it up? But we must not linger. The theme is a tempting one—but since we have touched upon it, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the light it casts upon the matter we have in hand, it behoves us to quit it and pass on.

We advance, then, to civil magistracy—"an ordinance of God." Guided in our inquiries by analogy, may we not fairly expect to discover in it, the same characteristics as those of other ordinances upon which he has set the impress of His authority—the same universality and impartiality in the distribution of good—the same benign regard to man as man, leaving out of sight the circumstances which surround him? "The greatest happiness of the greatest number"—or, in other

words, a majority enjoying advantage at the expense of a minority, is an object quite out of keeping with all the known designs of God, and cannot surely have been His purpose in the institution of civil government. The good which must be purchased at the cost of injustice, though the good be made available for the nine hundred and ninety-nine, and the injustice fall upon one only, savours far more of human than of divine contrivance. So lofty an edifice as that now under our survey, could not be based, according to the original plan, upon the necessity of wrong to any class, however helpless, or any individual, however obscure. If so, it is not only unlike to, but is inconsistent with, all else which has proceeded from the mind of the Supreme. Let us dismiss, then, from our thoughts, in attempting to track the range of advantages meant to flow to us from government, all idea of numbers—of majorities or minorities—of the relative position and importance of classes and of countries. If there is any correspondence between this appointment and others ordered by the same wisdom, its object is good to all and each—to mankind as a race, and to every man as an individual.

This conclusion to which analogy lights our path is ratified by Scripture. “He”—the ruling power—“is the minister of God to THEE for good.” To *thee*! The language individualizes the receivers of the benefit. Every one upon whom the obligation of obedience

rests, is included as, of right, a sharer in the advantage bestowed. The very form of the expression, if not intended to suggest, was probably itself suggested by, the idea upon which we have just dwelt. Government, framed and administered on principles in harmony with those of revelation, would bless each without injuring any. What it must needs take, in each case, would be more than made up in what it renders back.

It follows from what we have at present advanced, that such ends as cannot be reached without the infliction of injustice even upon the few, are as clearly beyond the legitimate scope of civil magistracy, as of individuals. It may suit the plausible and the superficial to urge and to justify the commission of trivial wrongs, with a view to what they regard as the public good, and to plead as an excuse for a trespass upon private rights the necessities of the ruling authority of an empire. It may be convenient for them, when reminded of whole classes of the community whose progress law directly impedes, to point to other, and perhaps, more numerous classes, who, in virtue of the same law, rise to prosperity. It may square with their notions of political right and wrong to strike a balance between good and evil, and decide that where the good preponderates the magistrate is bound to act. But all this, if our view be correct, Christianity condemns. It was not left to the wisdom of rulers thus to calculate chances, and

weigh tendencies, and transmute crime into virtue by an estimate of future consequences. No such responsibility was ever laid upon man in any of his relationships. No powers have been conferred upon him adequate to the discharge of it. If the proper object of civil government had not been missed, none such would have been needed. The governing authority, unless utterly misdirected, need violate no principle of equity, place at disadvantage no class, achieve no benefit for the many at the expense of the few, much less for the few at the cost of the many. And what it cannot effect, save by these means, Christianity does not warrant it to attempt.

No. V.

THE SWORD BEARER.

“For he beareth not the sword in vain.”

THE proper *object* of civil government, so far as it can be made out by the light of revealed truth, is, at present, our readers will bear in mind, the matter of our inquiry. We have already ascertained it to be, good to the governed, all and each. What kind of good, and by what means to be secured, is the next question. To this also, we think, a definite reply is given. Let us hear what it is.

It has become fashionable, of late, to assign as a sufficient reason for enlarging the sphere of the ruler's responsibility, authority, and action, the supreme dignity of his office. They who insist upon confining the exercise of its functions within certain limits—limits co-extensive, however, with the reach of the instrumentality at his command—are charged with entertaining low and unworthy notions of the duties of government. They are said to strip it of all that could gain for it the reverence of mankind—to sink its claims to the level of the merest common-place—to take from it

all moral grandeur—and so to reduce its pretensions by their narrow definitions, as to divest it of its proper majesty, and exhibit it to the world as a menial, scarcely deserving of even the outward show of homage. We take leave, by a remark or two, to push aside this obstacle to free inquiry in this matter. Real dignity—that which is truly becoming—that which may rightly claim and enjoy universal respect—attaches, not to extravagant pretensions, far outstretching the original design and obvious aptitude of any order of agency, but to its exact and constant fulfilment of its allotted part. Things are comely only in their place—out of it they are ridiculous. The horse doing the fitting work of a horse, humble as that is, excites admiration—the same animal, if we could conceive such a case, assuming to itself the responsibilities of a man, would but provoke laughter. Who that has witnessed the achievements of “the industrious fleas,” or has seen a canary go through the sword exercise, or has gaped in wonder at the performances of “the learned pig Toby,” ever retired from such exhibitions without a sense of the incongruities they present. Now, the same law which settles our judgment in these instances, ought to guide it to a right decision in higher ones. The dignity of civil government consists in its doing well *what it was appointed to do*—and the assumption for it of a wider sphere than that which it is qualified

to fill, is just one of those mistakes of self-conceit which our dramatist has held up to the merriment of the world, in the character of Bottom—"Let me play the lion too; I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar that I will make the duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'"

On our guard, then, against being misled by these Will-o'-th'-wisp notions of moral grandeur, we proceed in our investigation, and seek a response from the oracle, in reference to the question—What is it that the civil magistrate is appointed to do? We have it in one emphatic sentence, the more luminous because incidentally set forth—"He beareth not the sword in vain."

The sword, then, is at once the emblem and the instrument of magisterial authority. He wields, for purposes of justice and protection, the physical force of a nation. It is his to be "a terror to evil works—a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Private retaliation of injury would render the social state impossible—would make its elements mutually repellent of each other—would set each man's hand against every one, and every one's against each. To prevent this all resign their right to the use of the sword, and entrust it to a common arbitrator—civil government. To develop the principle of justice in law—to ascertain deviations from it by judicial process

—to exact penalties by a resort, if need be, to physical force—these constitute the primary object of civil rule. The kind of good, then, which a subject is entitled to expect from those placed in authority over him, is the good which may be secured by the right use of the sword, made over exclusively to them by common consent—the vindication and defence of his just rights. And this is all—literally all, which, in their magisterial capacity, they can successfully effect. Here is the necessity for this “ordinance of God,” and this necessity, and this alone, is it duly qualified to meet.

Take, now, the general idea of magistracy suggested to our minds by the simple image under which it is set forth in Holy Writ, and analyze it! The sword-bearer! Wherein is the special fitness of this representation of the intent and scope of government? Ponder it well, and see whether these are not the associations which it naturally calls up.

First, *command*. The appropriate utterance of physical force is “You shall.” Hence, the laws of the State should be such only as may fitly be cast into the imperative mood. The magistrate is not appointed to teach or to persuade—the sword is useless with a view to any such object—but to declare and to enforce. Legislation, then, should be, in all cases, the voice of *authority*, speaking beforehand what it will, if driven

to it, employ the sword to compass. And if this be so, the realms of thought and motive are beyond its jurisdiction, for neither can be reached by the only instrument at its command. Acts alone, or purposes so far as they are clearly made known by acts, come under the rightful cognizance of the sword-bearer. His laws should have exclusive reference to these, because with these only is he competent to deal. There are not a few individuals, we are aware, claiming, too, an intimate acquaintance with philosophy, who devolve upon Government the task of doing for a people whatever may be best done by concert and organization. They leave out of sight, however, the primary element of all magistracy—command, enforced by the sword. Almost all public objects require concerted action; few, however, can be fitly accomplished by the agency of physical force. The proclaimed intentions of the ruling power may wear a most benevolent aspect, but he who would judge of them aright must submit them to the test of this question, “Are they such as may be backed in the last resort by the sword?” If not, kindly and generous as they may seem, they lie beyond the legitimate scope of government.

Secondly, *judgment and the execution of it.* These belong, of course, to the nation’s sword-bearer. This man, in the pursuit of his fancied interests, commits a trespass upon my rights, whether of liberty, property, or

person. What is my remedy? How shall my weakness prevail against his strength? Law has beforehand denounced the wrong, and affixed to it the penalty. Who is to ascertain the extent of the one, and to exact the other? Where is my appeal? To Cæsar—to him who is “the minister of God to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil”—the depository of my country’s physical force—the sword-bearer. He is “the strong arm of the law,” clothed with authority to shield each from the aggressions of others, and to vindicate for each his individual rights. To administer justice, then; is his special business, the main end for which he is elevated to office. This done, even those who arrogate for him a sphere little short of that filled by Divine Providence, will be compelled to confess, “He beareth not the sword *in vain*.”

Lastly, *defence of the community*. This also is fitly shadowed forth by the scriptural emblem of magisterial power. The Government mounts guard for the nation. Whilst all are busy within the enclosure of an empire’s limits, the “powers that be” keep watch and ward upon its walls, proclaim the advent of danger from without, decide upon the kind and amount of resistance to be opposed to it. In short, to command, wherein command is necessary, to judge wherein judgment is required, to defend, wherein defence is called for; these are the objects which civil government un-

dertakes to effect for its subjects, which it is qualified, by its very nature, to attempt, which no other instrumentality can secure, and which, consequently, define with the utmost precision, the boundaries of the sphere within which it is to act.

With a view to work out these its legitimate results, civil government has a right to command, to the whole extent required, the resources of the empire, to claim homage, to exact tribute, to enforce service. Its authority, so far at least as it enjoys the sanction of Christianity, extends no further. Whatever else it attempts, is beyond the terms and tenor of its commission. Its duties are not parental, but rectorial. It is summoned into existence, not to do good, in a positive sense, but to prevent mischief. It is neither chief baker, nor butler, nor purveyor, nor almoner, nor presiding pedagogue, nor high-priest—but it is SWORD-BEARER, and all that such an office properly implies—nothing more, and nothing less.

No. VI.

A CLEAR STAGE AND NO FAVOR.

“NATURE, Sir, effected the cure—not I. We physicians can do nothing more than remove obstructions to the free action of Nature. She does all the rest.” Such in substance, was the reply given by a celebrated medical man, upon receiving the earnest thanks of a patient, who had reaped the benefit of his skill, a reply not more remarkable for the modesty it evinced than for the profound philosophy it contains. It may serve us as a text illustrative of the subject we have in hand—the proper object of civil government. What it was *appointed* to do, we have already seen—what, if revealed truth be consulted, must be set down as *no part of its business*, craves a word or two of remark, before we dismiss the first branch of our proposed inquiry.

“A clear stage and no favor”—that is all which human nature, whether individual or social, asks at the hands of government, that is all which it can advantageously receive. The laws of Providence affecting minds and morals, are not a whit more unsteady, how-

beit less known, than are those impressed upon matter. The "powers that be," like ignorant physicians, mistake their calling, when they suppose that their skill is to supply the healing efficacy which is to cure society of the evils which afflict it. By attempting too much, they have done incalculable mischief. They have never touched but to derange the natural order of things. They never yet attempted to build up an "interest," without doing, in the long run, far more harm than good. "To develop the resources and character of a people," is as great an absurdity at which for them to aim, as for the surgeon to pretend that he can develop the limbs and organs of a patient. The business of both is to give nature fair play, to remove obstructions, and to rely upon the operation of those laws which are to be ascribed to the Supreme wisdom, for bringing out of man whatever virtue there is in him. We affirm, then, and we shall try to make good the affirmation, that the object of civil government, with a view to secure which it is armed with the sword, does not, and cannot include, individual or social development and discipline.

Each man's life, according to the representations of Christianity, is a probation. Wrapt up within him when he comes into this world, are certain powers, animal, intellectual, moral and spiritual, which it is the great end of his being to unfold. With a view to

this, God has ordered all his arrangements—and external events, as regulated by his providential laws, constitute, as it were, the soil, the atmosphere, the dew, the sunshine and the showers, necessary to expand this immortal germ into blade, stalk, leaves, flower and fruit. Pleasure, therefore, is associated with every fitting exercise of these powers, penalty or pain with inaction or excess. The infant rolling on the floor, stretching its tiny limbs, testing its coming strength, and crowing its delight—the philosopher grasping an evasive truth in the far-off regions of speculation, and bringing it back with him to the realms of knowledge, with a flush of triumph on his brow—the moralist putting beneath his feet some restless and gigantic passion by sheer force of will—the saint finding daily enjoyment in winging higher and yet higher flights into the “unseen” world—these are but specimens of the care evinced by the Universal Ruler, and of the provision he has made, to elicit human capabilities into free, vigorous and self-sustained action, and of the value he has set upon spontaneity in all that relates to human development.

As if, moreover, to leave us without room for mistake in this matter, he has affixed to every unnatural suspension, waste or misapplication of these powers, an appropriate penalty. We cannot flee from a duty without, Jonah-like, meeting our punishment where

least we expected it. We cannot gratify a forbidden propensity, without arming it at the same time with the scourge with which to lash us. We cannot transgress the bounds pointed out to us by reason or conscience, without returning within the precincts of law, if we are happy enough to return at all, wearied and foot-sore. Communities fare in this respect as individuals. They are under a like system of rewards and punishments. They cannot devolve upon a substitute responsibilities which the Highest has imposed upon them. The true blessing consequent upon an obligation discharged, is associated exclusively with *their* discharge of it, the curse following a neglect of it, follows *their* neglect of it, however well it may have been fulfilled by proxy. And the certainty with which dereliction is connected with suffering, the unerring precision with which the appointed vengeance smites the guilty party, the fixed and undiminishable proportion which obtains between the wrong done, and the recompense received, render these arrangements of Providence tenfold more impressive. It is evident that this exactness and rigour of moral discipline is needed, in order to the ultimate development of the powers of man, both individual and social.

Christianity recognises all this, points attention to it, explains its meaning, builds much of its reasoning upon it, and supplies the most powerful of motives for putting

forth, in accordance with the laws of nature and of truth, all human capabilities. He in whom all government centres, who alone is able to follow causes through all their consequences, who sees to the end of His own work, and can forbearingly wait while one form of error and evil after another is springing up, maturing, and decaying, He alone, we say, possesses the knowledge requisite to the conducting of this vast and intricate system of discipline and development. Man cannot deal with it authoritatively without deranging it, destroying here what he would renovate there, creating many evils where he achieves a solitary good, paralyzing energies which he meant to strengthen, drying up sympathies just where he intended to consult them, letting in troops of miseries by the very gate which he set open for the expulsion of a single one, aggravating the mischief which it was his aim to cure.

“A clear stage and no favour.” Let us apply the maxim, and our own reasonings upon it, to some definite and tangible question, say, general education. The gist of our observations may thus be made more distinct and impressive.

It will hardly be denied that the Divine Ruler has made his own provision for the training up of successive generations. Parental instinct, natural curiosity, the power connected with knowledge, the miseries which grow up apace on the soil of ignorance, His own com-

mand, and the peculiar motives for obeying it which Christianity supplies, all constitute part of that moral apparatus which He has constructed to secure the education of rising manhood. Nor can it well be doubted that upon communities, as such, devolves the responsibility of spontaneously supplying those defects which spring out of the inability of individuals. The performance of the duty has its abundant rewards, the neglect of it its heavy penalties. The end, however, is not at present secured. What then? Is it the business of government to take the matter in hand? Our argument replies "No." The duty of civil government is to provide "a clear stage and no favour," to remove impediments to the free agency of moral nature and religious zeal, to see to it that nothing in the shape of its own fiscal exactions or of class injustice operates to prevent the fullest and freest play of those instincts and responsibilities by which the end is to be secured. Suppose, however, the voluntary system to fail, the penalties of failure begin to take effect. True! they are serious—they were meant to be so—but it is very questionable whether any third party, such as the State, stepping in between the neglect and the penalty, will not, in the end, make confusion worse confounded. We shall admit, what is seriously to be doubted, that it secures for the time being the good it desired—a competent education for all its subjects. It does this, be

it remembered, by appealing to an entirely different and opposite class of motives to those which would have been active under the laws of Providence—it compels where they sought only to induce. Now who amongst us can calculate the ultimate effects of this on a national scale, or how far the displacement of God's moral apparatus for man's physical and mechanical one will disturb the action of those sweet influences which bind society together? Who can say what will be its bearing upon parental solitudes, what its results upon filial respect and duty, what its future and settled action upon domestic relationships, what expanding sympathies it will dry up, what sense of responsibility it will benumb—how it will act and re-act on human selfishness; what widening and ever-widening circles of mistake this one stroke of policy may cause, the fresh necessities it will engender, the new and yet more difficult spheres of action it will compel the government to enter? All this is unknown to us as yet, or can only be guessed at; but enough appears upon the surface to prove that all interferences by government with individual or social discipline and development have hitherto worked out the most disastrous consequences.

The experiment has been tried in trade and commerce, and it unexpectedly dragged us to the verge of national ruin. It has been tried in the State-main-

tenance of the poor, and is rapidly becoming altogether unmanageable. It has been tried in religion, and the empire groans beneath the burden of its failure. Governments have mistaken their calling, as Phaeton did his when he aspired to drive his father's chariot. They have elected themselves the vicegerents of Divine Providence, and it will be long ere the world ceases to rue their childish and imbecile presumption.

No. VII.

HANDS OFF.

THAT there should be any necessity at this time of day, for discussing the question, whether the religion of their subjects properly falls under the care of civil governments, proves how much has yet to be learnt as to what religion really is, and as to the kind of power which magistracy can wield. We have treated upon this subject pretty copiously before now. As, however, the present series of papers would be wanting in completeness if we were to omit it altogether, we shall conclude our inquiry into the OBJECT of civil government with a word or two touching its relationship to the various embodiments of Christian truth—namely, the Church.

“A godless and infidel government” is the phrase deemed most applicable, in the present day, to describe a body of rulers occupying the position which is assigned to them by the theory of Voluntaryism. The cuckoo note, repeated from mouth to mouth, has not been without effect. Statesmen begin to dread the missile—partisans, to hurl it—the public, to fancy

there must be some force in it. And yet, what, when closely examined, does it mean? What fact does it represent? What truth of Christianity does it imply? That the men who constitute Government are godless and unbelieving? Not at all. They may be a company of saints, and yet stand exposed to this foul-looking charge. They may be a set of atheists, and yet escape it. The brand is intended only for those who decline to use the *sword* in support of *religious* institutions, who have formed too exalted an estimate of Christian truth to imagine that the undermost basis of its stability must be physical force. Themselves distrustful of God's own word—too weak of faith to rely upon the energies of spiritual truth—supporting, by their system, that earth which its Maker has balanced in the heavens by the laws of gravitation, upon the back of an elephant, who again is upborne by a tortoise, these Establishmentarian philosophers, who mistake metaphysical obscurity for abstruseness, and who seem to fancy confusion of ideas and profundity of thought to be one and the same thing, gratify at once their self-complacency and their intolerance by designating the civil magistrate who declines to touch with unconsecrated hands the sacred ark of the covenant—"godless and infidel." The badge which more appropriately belongs to the system they advocate, they transfer, by a bold perversion of language, to one

which professes to trust implicitly in God, and the leading characteristic of which is, faith in the power of the unseen and eternal. "A godless and infidel government"—

"I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word."

Our antagonists of the Free Church school must excuse us for declining to contest the question with them in the mid air of their metaphysical subtleties, where they can, at a pinch, so conveniently shroud themselves in a mist of unintelligible dogmas, and thus elude the force of every argument. We greatly prefer fighting it out on the solid ground of common sense and plain statement, and shall therefore take leave to dispose of the matter in dispute, according to our own habits of controversy. The whole question lies in a nutshell. Does it lie within the legitimate province of the civil power, as sanctioned by Christianity, to *compel* men to contribute of their substance towards the maintenance of those who devote themselves exclusively to spiritual ministration? Where subjects are unwilling, and the voluntary principle is supposed to have failed, ought the *sword* to be employed to enforce support for the clergy? On the hypothesis that God's "ought" is insufficient, is man's "shall" to take its place? This is the real point to be decided. It is only mystifying the matter to represent government as bound, equally with individuals, to employ a portion of

its funds, in ensuring the proclamation of the Gospel of peace. The State has no funds which it can properly call its own. It can take funds from the pockets of its subjects, in virtue of the organized physical force at its command, and it can give those funds to religious teachers. Well, now! does Christianity require or permit it to resort to compulsion on her behalf—to demand, in the first instance, without reference to the consent of its subjects—to enforce, if necessary, in the last, by the policeman's truncheon, or the soldier's musket, or any or all of the murderous appliances of war? Is the magistrate called upon by Christ's gospel, to put out his whole strength, in case of extremity, to force from his subjects a decent maintenance of religious ordinances and worship?

The plain, undisguised, homespun statement of the question at issue, will furnish, to unsophisticated minds, the most decisive reply to it. Can spiritual ends be promoted by physical force? or the world be made more godly by the aid of gunpowder and cold steel? Show us how that is to be deduced from the philosophy of Christianity.

But then, "the resources of the State are held in trust for God, and must be employed to His glory, and to the furtherance of His purposes." Agreed—but how does this touch the point, save by adroitly begging the whole question. Is God's glory consulted,

are His purposes furthered, by resting the support of Christian institutions upon magisterial authority? If so, doubtless it can be proved. We humbly crave to be made acquainted with the process of argument by which this conclusion is reached. Nay! no jumping, if you please! Step by step, demonstrate to us from the statute-book of Christianity, that "robbery for burnt offering" is part of Christ's plan for the regeneration of the world, and we will retire from our position, confessedly discomfited. Before doing so, however, we propose to try the question upon a small and intelligible scale.

In a little village, no matter how named, or where situated, a young man of active habits and athletic limbs, practised, moreover, in the pugilistic art, had, by dint of many fights, established himself as the little lord of its few inhabitants. Out of his unquestionable physical superiority was ultimately evolved a considerable moral power. The rural Hercules could settle disputes without any appeal to the fist, his authority carrying with it the conviction that there was force enough at the back of it, if needed, to carry into effect his own decisions. The parish minister happened to be most scantily paid by the half-civilized few who frequented his church. A friendship, however, sprung up between himself and the broad-shouldered youth, from which the latter reaped much spiritual advantage.

The question occurred to him, whether, in return for this, he could not confer some benefit on the minister. He reasoned to this effect: "My stalwart limbs, my early training, and the championship which by their means I have secured, are talents entrusted to me to be employed to the glory of my Maker. The minister is in want, and I cannot doubt that the supply of his wants would be a thing in accordance with the divine will. I cannot supply them myself, but I can make my neighbours do it. They know I can make good my word. I have but to order the thing to be done, and to double my fist in token of my earnestness, and no one will dare to say nay." Now what we ask is, whether this young pugilist is bound by a regard to "God's glory," to scare the inhabitants of the village into a better support of their spiritual instructor; and if it be replied, "Why, no! because God's glory cannot be promoted by unlawful means;" we rejoin, "Exactly so! Prove to us, therefore, that the use of the sword by the civil magistrate in aid of Christian truth is legitimate; and when you have done this, apply your conclusion as you list. But don't urge a solemn truism with a view to cover a naked fallacy."

Really we feel humbled that any necessity should exist for arguing so plain a matter. We will not however, yield to the temptation of detaining our readers by serious and philosophical disquisition on

what is readily determined by an enlightened moral sense. Strip the question of its worldly dress, show it just as it must appear when reduced to actual fact; present it in a visible body, instead of as an intellectual abstraction, and both reason and piety recoil from it. Civil government is under obligation to protect all its subjects in maintaining such relationship to their Creator as their own consciences may dictate; a relationship prior to any into which we enter with "the powers that be." But the support of religious institutions is no part of its object, much less the control of religious profession. Christianity, like her Author, when He had risen from the tomb, mildly declines the proffered embrace of a merely secular power; and says, with much solemnity, to the too forward and ignorant advances of magisterial authority, "Touch me not! My kingdom is not of this world, for if my kingdom were of this world, *then would my servants FIGHT.*"

No. VIII.

LETTER INTERPRETED BY SPIRIT.

WE have done with the OBJECT of Civil Government—its STRUCTURE claims notice from us now. The design of the machine having been ascertained, we pass on, in natural order, to inspect the nature of the machinery. We are to learn, if possible, what Christianity teaches on that head.

Let us, then, start with as clear an understanding as may be of what we are about to look after. It is obvious that the worth of our conclusions will be very mainly dependent upon the character of our aim. If, for example, we strain ingenuity to discover in the system of revealed truth, intimations which, when torn from their natural connexion, and pieced together, may furnish us with a complete Scriptural model of civil government, we may spend on the task prodigious labour without finding any adequate reward in its results. The steam-engine will be searched for in vain amongst the objects of nature. The various contrivances by which its movements are adjusted, are exclusively of human origin, although suggested in cer-

tain particulars, it may be, by natural phenomena. But, as in the case of the steam-engine, a thorough acquaintance with the laws of the material world, may throw much light upon the fitness of the mechanism to accomplish the ends intended by it, so a correct knowledge and application of the principles of Christianity, may help us to a sound judgment on the value of the several forms into which man's wisdom or folly has thrown civil governments. Now, something like this is what we are about to attempt, in a few following papers. We shall bring under the consideration of our readers certain moral laws, found in Divine revelation, in perfect harmony with which all forms of State-rule ought to be framed.

There is, we suspect, a vague feeling abroad, that Christianity has directly sanctioned, or proscribed, certain systems for the civil government of mankind. The "divine right" of monarchs, rejected now by the understanding, has still a home in the sentiments, of British Christians. The loyalty which covers with a veil of charity the immoralities of a Court, or the oppressive tendencies of a Cabinet, is by not a few identified with religion. Hereditary authority to make the laws of a country is looked on as sacred. Republicanism is believed to be replete with infidelity, and even chartism is shrunk from as impious. Now, it is not a little important that we should get a settled con-

viction upon our minds, that all such conclusions as those to which we have adverted, are essentially Jewish; they are gathered from an economy of forms; they belong to that class of things which one of the largest-hearted exponents of the new faith has not scrupled to characterise as "beggarly elements;" they are the fitting bonds with which for those men to fetter themselves, who addict themselves to the "letter," in opposition to the "spirit." Absolutism, constitutional monarchy, government by representation, aristocracy, chartism, republicanism—as mere *forms* of civil rule, are all alike to preceptive Christianity. This is not more scriptural than that—that, than any other. All are human contrivances, more or less adapted to answer the end in view—mere mechanism put together by man's ingenuity. In particular conditions of society, and at special junctures, each may be found superior to the others; none can claim for itself as a form divine authority.

Why, then, it may be asked, consult Christianity upon the subject at all? Why seek a response from the oracle when you know already that upon the subject mooted it is dumb? Why intimate that you will ascertain what revelation teaches on a question respecting which you admit that revelation says nothing? Softly! softly, gentle reader—and we will furnish you with an answer.

In olden times, as you well know, knowledge was transmitted from one generation to another by means of manuscript. Books, accordingly, were few and dear. Men possessed of more than one volume were singularly favoured. Rich indeed was he who could boast of a library containing twelve. In due time printing succeeded writing, the pen was supplanted by the press. Imagine, now, a controversy to have arisen, as to the scriptural lawfulness of the new method of fixing and transmitting human ideas. Imagine religious men contending for the divine sanction given in the Bible to the simpler, earlier, and more elaborate mode of transferring the product of mind to paper. Should we not be right in saying that, considered merely as different *methods* of doing the same thing, Christianity knows nothing of them, and that writing with a style on vellum, or with a goose-quill on paper, or with fixed or moveable type by means of the printing press, are matters, in themselves considered, about which it is supremely indifferent? And yet, having said this, might we not gain some light in reference to the comparative superiority of the one to the other by taking into account some of the leading characteristics of revealed truth, the obligations it imposes, the motives it seeks to excite, the ends it is designed to attain, the means by which it will compass them, the deep interest which all have in its blessings, the responsibi-

lity of each to all for diffusing them—might not these and many kindred topics peculiar to Christianity be urged to prove that the adaptation of the printing press to multiply the means of knowledge, and add wings to those who proclaim the everlasting Gospel, places it under the special sanction of Christianity? And should man's genius hereafter discover some method of reaching the same end by means as superior to the steam press as the steam press is to the pen, might not the same considerations avail to recommend the immediate substitution of the more for the less efficient instrument? Thus, while Scripture is dumb on the question of machinery, it yet abounds with instruction which, wisely applied, may teach us how and why to prefer this form above that, and in what circumstances to be thankful for either.

The case of civil government is precisely analogous. They who contend for one form of government as having the sanction of revelation rather than another, because it is the form commonly met with in sacred history, might just as reasonably esteem writing on parchment a more religious act than printing on paper. The last decision would not be a tittle more absurd than the first. We affirm that Christianity recognises *no* form of government, as such—denounces none. Yet does it contain great principles of equity, justice, and benevolence—teach important truths respecting

man's nature, position, and destiny—impose weighty obligations of individual and social morality, and proceed upon the recognition of elementary laws affecting our discipline as responsible and immortal beings, all of which may help us to determine whether the machinery of civil government, as constructed in our own times, is in unison with the object and spirit of Divine revelation. We are to look at the structure, not with a view to pronounce which form—this or that—is Scriptural, but, bearing in mind what Christianity is, and what it purports to do, we are to fill our hearts with those its instructions, which will best qualify us to judge of any and every form which may come before us. And this will be our plan in the few papers which follow.

No. IX.

A STRONG GOVERNMENT.

“ We must not make a scare-crow of the law,
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,
And let it keep one shape, till custom make it
Their perch, and not their terror.”

CHRISTIANITY is always in earnest. The truth she unfolds, whether direct or incidental, whether trivial or important, is gravely and sincerely uttered, and may always be taken for a reality, not a sham. The bright-eyed and clear-complexioned maiden speaks nothing in a double sense, means nothing equivocal, sanctions nothing which merely

“ Keeps the word of promise to the ear,
And breaks it to the hope.”

Assuredly, to a mind much conversant with the ways of men, the delusive pretences of most—the magniloquent boastings, ending in the silliest performances of, not a few—and the insincerities, in some shape or other, of almost all—insincerities of custom, place, manner, speech, or countenance—oh, it is reviving, to turn away, at times, from these, and to resign one’s

spirit to all the pure influences which are exhaled around it by the simplicity of Nature ! Thoroughly can we sympathize with the exiled duke who, when custom had sweetened his exile in the forest of Arden, could welcome

————— “ the icy fang,
And churlish chiding of the winter’s wind ;
Which when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say—
This is no flattery : these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.”

Who has ever walked forth in early dawn, who has ever rested him, at midday, in shady haunts of retirement, or has stood, when eve is radiant with blushes, upon the beach of the blue and transparent ocean, without being pervaded and exhilarated by a sense of the unmistakable *sincerity* which environs his whole being ? All is gentle and noiseless, but everything *does* what it promised to do, and, for the most part, something more. The glittering dew-drop trembling and sparkling within the bell of some wayside flower, the scarce visible violet scenting the neighbourhood with its sweet perfume, the babbling brook, carrying refreshment with it in all its gamesome windings and doublings, and fringing itself on either hand with deeper verdure, the dark glen, in which, when wandering alone, one breathes thick, oppressed with the feeling of awful solitude, and starts with fluttering pulse

at the slightest appearance of life, the sea, the glorious sea, basking, as if asleep, under the full moon, or heaving and bellowing defiance to the driving clouds overhead, or frisking among fragments of rock, in all kinds of unexpected swells, and currents, and eddies, like a kitten racing after its own tail—all tell us what they mean, speak, without stammering or equivocation, the message they were charged to deliver, boast of nothing, mystify nothing, but do their own work, and, in doing it, have a smile of gladness for all who choose to watch their performance of it.

And this crystal sincerity of Nature, this universal ascendancy of the real over the merely nominal in all the visible and material works of God, is but, as it were, a grosser adumbration of what is, perhaps, more delicately, but with equal decision, exhibited in Revelation. The difference between the one and the other is but a difference of manifestation. The qualities displayed are the same—bodied forth, in the one case by matter, and in the other by mind. Perhaps nothing is more characteristic of Christianity than the gentleness, and, if we may be permitted the expression, the coyness, of its power. See how unobtrusively, how like a “sister of mercy,” it has gone among the nations, breathing its divine message of love, in glances, and smiles, and gestures of pity, rather than in words, or when it speaks, speaking in whispers of suggestion

rather than in tones of authority, and, whereas, other systems have professed to discover and reveal the Unseen Spirit in the "wind," the "earthquake," and the "fire," mark how Christianity delights exclusively in the "still small voice!" But yet the hidden power, the energy, so much only of which has been shown as may serve to impress us with the larger proportion which has been reserved, has done its promised work, if not in the vulgar form in which humanity expected it would be done, in a much more satisfactory and abiding shape. The history of revealed truth, from the utterance of the first words of promise to the experience of the present moment, has been one continuous testimony against inefficiency and sham, wherever they might appear; and within the circle of that light which emanates from the Gospel, nothing hollow, delusive, or short of avowed purposes, can hope to stand with favour.

With such thoughts as these borne in upon us by all outward objects, physical or spiritual, which acknowledge God as their author, and from that atmosphere of sentiment which such reflections beget, we turn to contemplate the *structure* of civil Government. What, if the form of it is to be in unison with the spirit of Christianity,—what do we expect to find it? Unquestionably, a sincerity. This characteristic it must have, if no other. Not only shall we, in the

light of divine revelation, regard with abhorrence every "organized hypoeisy," but we shall look for truthfulness and power in the means in which the organization consists, as well as in the end which it seeks to accomplish. No form of government can be in keeping with the discoveries of the Bible, which is only, or for the most part, *form*. The machinery must needs be strong enough for the work assigned to it, and should be strong enough to do that work quietly, without a stunning and everlasting elatter. There is sometimes a bustle in governments which is mistaken for vigour, a silence which is misconstrued into weakness. And yet, a really strong government is ordinarily a quiet one, doing by a word or hint, what a feeblor organization must have done by a convulsion.

The object of civil government, as we have said, is two-fold, punitive and protective,—its structure must be such as will admit of, and further, the fulfilment of this double end. There may be a form of free institutions, where administration of law, and conservation of social order, are utterly unknown, and if the defect, the executive imbecility, the magisterial weakness, can be fairly traced to the form, then, whatever other recommendations such a Government may possess, it cannot be said to have a structure approved by Christianity. That state is little better than a sham, the executive of which is compelled to confess—

“ Now, as fond fathers
Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,
Only to stick it in their children's sight,
For terror, not to use ; in time, the rod
Becomes more mock'd than fear'd: so, our decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead ;
And liberty plucks justice by the nose ;
The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
Goes all decorum.”

We need not cite historical illustrations, for our space will hardly admit of it, much less shall we adduce modern instances, which might appear invidious. But we look upon all those embodiments of the democratic principle, in which, jealousy for the popular power cripples the execution of law, as essentially unsound, insincere, and anti-Christian. The ordinance of civil government was never intended to be other than a grave reality, the “power” was never consecrated to “bear the sword *in vain*.” There are few sights more pitiable, as there are few over which Christianity more unfeignedly, and, we may add, indignantly grieves, than that of civil government cited, at every step it takes in the independent discharge of its duty, before its own subjects, to be reminded that it is servant, not master, and that its administration of law must be in the spirit of a slave, rather than of a judge. From such institutions, we fervently pray to be evermore delivered.

It is not the less true, however, although many are anxious to overlook the fact, that the chief danger from which civil government has to apprehend the frustration of its object, springs, not from the people, but from elevated and favoured classes. It is not so much in the executive, as in the legislative, that we are likely to find forms overlaying and destroying realities. A State should be strong, not merely against insubordinate subjects, who seldom complain without reason, but also as against encroaching and insidious factions, whose influence results in anything rather than "praise to those who do well." A machinery, deliberately put together, with a view to the political ascendancy of any one order, an external form which is meant to give expression to the will of one class as paramount to that of all others, a structure which practically excludes the influence of the poor, and which, consequently, leaves them unprotected from the oppressive habits and exactions of the rich—legislation, which is sure of siding with property against labour—magistracy, which must needs be partial to the wealthy—institutions and forms of rule which help the powerful to crush the weak, instead of shielding the weak from the aggressions of the powerful, these are far more common, and are little less to be dreaded, than those overbearing popular interferences of which we just now spoke. Compelled to succumb

to such influences, civil government is merely a pretence, professes to do what it has not power to accomplish, exhibits on its brow a purpose which either its heart repudiates or its hands refuse to ratify. To be driven from its legitimate object, whether by the factions of the few, or the threats of the many, is bad enough, but to make provision in its constitutional frame-work for being so overruled, is a disgrace to any government, and brands it as hostile in its very form to the first principles of Christianity.

No. X.

MAN ABOVE PROPERTY.

THERE is a sense in which it is almost impossible to utter too severe a condemnation of human nature. Considered simply in reference to his disposition towards other beings, and especially towards the Supreme, to whom he owes unlimited allegiance, man never has exhibited—never will exhibit—ought that is satisfactory. He takes up a false position, and his bearing, consequently, towards all surrounding objects must be false. He constitutes himself the centre of his own desires, purposes, and actions—and hence, however effective his proceedings, they go for nothing, or, it may be, worse than nothing, because the aim is shorter and lower than it should be. The created and dependent being, even the most exalted in the scale of intelligence, who makes himself his end, degrades all his powers, ignobly hires them out to a slavery for which they were never intended, and does his intellectual and moral nature, which was evidently constructed with a view to high and honourable service, the grossest outrage of which it is capable. In this sense, and in

this only, "man is vile." This is substantially what divines mean, or ought to mean, when they speak in strongly disparaging terms of human nature. It is not the mechanism—whether body, soul, or spirit, that is judged to be at fault; it is merely the sad and systematic misapplication of it to unworthy purposes which provokes, as it merits, unqualified denunciation. It is not what man is, regarded as a bundle of susceptibilities and powers, but what uniformly and perversely he is inclined to do with them, that exposes him to humiliating censure. We speak of him as fallen, not in reference to his capabilities, but his will. The glory he has lost, is almost exclusively the glory of right-heartedness.

In other respects he does most honour to the Creator, who most promptly and most gratefully recognizes what of good there is in the creature. The meditation of the Prince of Denmark may echo, it is true, the voice of pride, but it may also express the thoughts and feelings of genuine piety:—

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension how like a God! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!"

He is so. That is altogether a mistaken humility—nay, it is not humility, but the pride which apes it

—which parades its readiness to trample the dignity of human nature in the dust. Oftentimes, we fancy, they are foremost to take the scourge in hand, and to play the drummer's cruellest vocation on the naked back of poor humanity's reputation, who know not how to appreciate man's inherent and inalienable greatness. They will whip till wheals and blood disfigure what should have been comely; and, when they have done their disgusting work, hug to their bosom the pleasing idea that they have used the lash with compassionate reluctance, and solely in deference to the stern biddings of piety. And yet seldom do these executioners of "mankind in the abstract" pause in their self-appointed task, startled by the recognition of God's image on the soul of man. Many an individual who would stand awe-stricken on the summit of an extinct volcano, or who could trace the finger of the Highest in the fossil remains of pre-Adamite monsters, refuses to take note of the mental and spiritual capabilities of human nature, all majestic as they are, and gloriously reflective of a skill and goodness which claim adoration wherever and in whatever objects developed. The harshness of which we speak is the child of selfishness and misapprehension—of the ambition which is gratified in occupying the bench of justice, and passing sentence—and of the foolish notion that to spit upon man is the most certain way

to exalt man's Maker. Revelation lends no encouragement to this kind of wholesale self-depreciation.

Unflinching as is Christianity in disclosing to us the wretchedness of our *case* it never reflects a doubt upon the original dignity of our *nature*. It is, indeed, itself, at once, the noblest and most impressive witness to it. The fact that this world possesses a divine revelation—a revelation, too, of so peculiar and costly a character as that of Christianity—is utterly incompatible with any mean estimate of the worth and importance of man, as man. But this fact, decisive as it is, speaks only the substance of the doctrine on which we dwell. The tone and spirit of the Gospel—the refined and elevated character of its blessings, the kind of argument it habitually wields, the reverence it pays to all our faculties, the confidence with which it appoints us judge in our own case, the pathetic tenderness of its appeals, and its unique structure as a remedial economy—enhance, at every turn, the weight of that testimony which the very existence of revelation had already given to us. True, there is no flourish of trumpets! No apostrophic bursts! No gorgeous descriptions, edged off with notes of admiration! The truth is quietly assumed, not passionately insisted upon—and the whole significance of Christianity is made to be so much of a piece with it, that it is impossible to separate, even in thought, the one from the other. The

whole Bible teaches that human nature cannot, without impiety, be despised.

There is, however, one mode resorted to by Christianity, for the purpose of throwing light upon man and his position, of which we shall gladly avail ourselves as a door opening directly upon our present subject—we mean, that of contrasting the body with the raiment, the life with the meat, the man with his circumstances. It cannot escape notice, even with the most heedless of students, how, while exalting and glorifying man himself, Christianity, advisedly and systematically, puts a slight upon the accidents of his position, as of no account whatever. *Property*, as such, is, according to her estimate, nothing—*man* is everything. *That* she never honours for its own sake—*him* she does. The splendid habitation, the ample patrimony, the blazing livery of wealth, the signs, so dazzling, yet so various, of luxury and station, draw from her no such recognition as this world seems to have concluded they are entitled to expect—whilst, underneath the ruggedest and most loathsome exterior, she welcomes humanity wherever she meets with it, and gives it a smile of unaffected homage. Burns drew his inspiration from the New Testament when he sang

“The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.”

It is hardly possible, then, to conceive of anything

more out of tune with the key-note of Christianity, than civil government, the machinery of which rests upon a basis of property in preference to manhood. The measurement of social value by wealth alone, is enough to vitiate and disgrace any political constitution. It is a sort of national exaltation of pounds sterling, above mind, conscience, and heart. It is homage done by law to a consideration which law should be the very last to recognize. And wherever, in the frame-work of civil government, this in-working of the money qualification, is met with in every quarter—so that it, in fact, is constituted the staple material of all honourable instrumentality—wheels, levers, balances, escapements, everything, in a word, but dead weight—there you will see Justice, as drawn by the hand of Mammon, but not as portrayed by the hand of Revelation.

It is not our intention to dwell upon the subject, or to fortify our position with proofs and illustrations. Our readers know well we shall not have far to go in search of them. We content ourselves with furnishing a principle which may be applied by all in estimating the true value of such forms of government as may come before them for examination and judgment. But we may avail ourselves of the occasion for suggesting, that very much of the evil, social, moral, and spiritual, which overruns, as rank weeds, our own country,

springs out of this constitutional soil at which we have glanced as diametrically opposed to the genius of Christianity—and that no great advance is likely to be made in the science of civil administration until we learn, one and all, to receive the truth everywhere prominent in the gospel, that human nature is rather to be honoured than wealth—*that man comes before property.*

No. XI.

AN INVITATION AND A WELCOME TO
WISDOM AND VIRTUE.

EVERYBODY, we suppose, whose mind has ventured beyond the threshold of mere animal existence, has met, in some one or other of his walks of inquiry, with a remark, now almost proverbial, the purport of which is wonder at the little wisdom required for the government of nations. That facts have usually been such as to suggest the reflection and awaken the surprise, cannot be well denied—for civil administration has seldom been assigned either to the wise or the virtuous. But we have no right to confound that which is with that which ought to be. The management of peoples is not the *proper* work either of folly or of vice. The helm of State cannot be abandoned to them without wantonly exposing the vessel to destruction. It may be, and indeed is, matter of amazement that incompetency and depravity should have been so often promoted to posts of high command, and that society should not have been more frequently run by such pilotage upon reefs and quicksands. But

the evils men have already suffered from misgovernment are in the aggregate so great, so incalculable, that it behoves us to be very careful lest we allow our feelings to interpret a permitted fact into an ordained law, and conclude, that because kingdoms in general have been presided over by very common-place humanity, nothing superior to a dead-level average of intelligence—nothing better than the coarsest earthenware of character, is required for the important task.

Virtue, substantially, is the choice of right ends—wisdom, the employment of right means for their attainment—and, surely, if anywhere they should be evermore seen hand-in-hand, it is in the department of civil government. For, be it borne in mind, that although law, and the organized power which gives force to law, cannot do much, if it can do anything, to add to the *positive* enjoyment of men, it can do an immense deal to hinder it. History proves to how lamentable an extent this remark is true. Magistracy touches society in almost every prominent point of its development, and too generally, alas! for mischief and ruin. Let us not blink this—for the world gains nothing from the custom of gilding harsh facts with glittering expressions. We say, there is abundant evidence in the volume of history showing that, at most points in which contact has been established between civil government and civilized society, the latter has suffered

injury. We speak not now of the direct evils which State mismanagement has brought upon kingdoms—our glance embraces in preference the more indirect but not less calamitous results of unwise or corrupt legislation. In its influence upon individual character, and, more perceptibly, perhaps, upon national tendencies—in holding up to view false standards of judgment, and giving the highest earthly sanction to unsound moral principles—in creating and sustaining an atmosphere unfavourable to the growth of just and generous sentiments—in feeding human selfishness where it should have aimed to starve it—in encouraging rapacity where it should have frowned it down—in hindering the free exercise of thought, and checking the full play of religious emotion—civil government has done more than man's intelligence can sum up to retard social progress, and to prevent the natural expansion and triumph of right as opposed to might, of the world's remedy as opposed to the world's woe.

Wisdom, then, not folly—virtue, not immorality—is required at the helm of State affairs. These are the counteractive agencies by which, if obedient to the arrangements of Providence, we shall meet the inherent tendency of power in human hands to run into abuse, and set limits to its invariable lawlessness of disposition. We are to expect no miracle, no arbitrary interposition of Deity between causes and effects. Civil government

is a power for good or for evil, according as its structure admits or excludes whatever there is of integrity and wisdom amongst a people. The machinery cannot safely be entrusted to the oversight of a fool, or to the conduct of a knave. On the contrary, we have every reason to anticipate, nay! we are bound to believe, that the missing of any fair opportunity for collecting and expressing the fullest amount of intelligence and moral worth which a country can command, for framing the laws by which it is to be governed, or for putting them into practical force, entails a penalty of national suffering, as certain, if not so distinctly to be traced, as any which God has ordained to keep watch over moral principles in the connexion in which he has placed them to individual behaviour. The government of a nation is, in some sense, its head; and if the head be senseless, or worse, what is like to become of the members? Scripture tells us, in its own expressive idiom, "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted." Oh! what a terrible sermon History has preached upon this text!

Now, it can hardly be necessary to fortify by argument the position, as if liable to dispute, that Christianity requires an economical and liberal use of all facilities in pursuance of the ends they were given to promote. The conscientious appropriation of the talents entrusted to our keeping, is, indeed, amongst

the most important of the practical results at which revelation aims. And it matters nothing to the line of remark we are following up, whether these disposable advantages be within reach of an individual or a nation; in any case, they carry with them special obligations, and increase, in a proportionate extent, the amount of responsibility. A Government to be in strict harmony with Christian principles, is bound *to collect and to reflect, in all its movements, the wisdom and virtue of the community* over which it presides, and its constitutional form and machinery should be such as to invite and welcome these qualities from every quarter, and to make provision for their employment, as widely as possible, in the service of the State. In other words, civil government should so arrange its own economy, as to secure servants most likely to know, and most heartily disposed to do, their duty to the governed.

It is, at once, a curious and melancholy fact, that the governments least adapted, in the arrangement of their mechanism, for eliciting and expressing the intelligence and integrity of their subjects, are those which boast not a little of their civilization and religion; whilst the empire which most systematically bases its political structure upon mental and moral worth, wherever it can be found, is heathen to its heart's core, and would be regarded by Europeans as

removed to no great distance from absolute barbarism—we mean China. Throughout the “flowery land,” mind takes precedence of matter, and character goes before mere wealth, whilst political office opens its doors exclusively to those whose intellectual qualifications have been again and again proved. In Europe, generally, and certainly, in Great Britain, merit is no passport to power. If the wisdom of the community finds its way into the legislature, it is by accident, not by express provision. Strength of limb, or physical beauty, has just the same right of ingress to citizenship, as reach of understanding or purity of heart. That is, the structure of civil government here, is founded upon principles altogether independent of intelligence and integrity, and one may unite the wisdom of a Solomon with the conscientiousness of a Josiah, without having, through a lifetime, a single constitutionally-provided opportunity, of consecrating such qualifications to the service of civil government.

The very form, then, of political rule, which takes no account whatever of the chief qualities which that rule, in order to be beneficial, must needs demand, is unchristian—wars against the first principles of Divine revelation. The construction of all governments ought to be such as not merely to admit of, but to attract and to fix the highest possible talents and character. Any systematic exclusion of these, or any practical

disregard of them in deference to station, or wealth, or party connexion, is an anomaly, when viewed in reference to the principles of Divine truth. To be in unison with the Bible, we must know how to prefer, not merely the man to his position, but the highest attributes of man to those which are inferior; and in a political as well as in an individual sense, we must appreciate the sentiment thus expressed by the wisest of human authorities—"Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom *giveth life* to them that have it." It answers its purpose not by chance, but by its own intrinsic power and worth. It is, in a word, self-reliant and self-sufficient.

No. XII.

STATE EDUCATION.

STATE education! The term of late has been representative of a controversy involving principles of primary importance, and, owing perhaps to the battered and work-stained condition in which it has come out from the conflict of parties, its very appearance is apt to beget unpleasant reminiscences, and to excite in the minds of quiet folk a strong desire to give it the go-bye. There are large classes of persons who will take the alarm as soon as they catch sight of the heading of this paper—persons upon whom it will operate like a notice that “man-traps and spring-guns are set here,”—persons, in short, who have determined never again to be tempted within the borders of the question suggested by the terms we have made use of, lest, perchance, they should again be worried and torn with the numerous controversial points which overrun it in all directions. Well! now, it may be as well for us to state at once that we are not about to venture on that controverted ground. We believe, indeed, that there is one mode in which the mind and morals of a people

may be safely and legitimately trained by civil government—but it is not the mode patronized by modern politicians. We hold that the machinery of the State may be so constructed, as to further that most valuable of all kinds of education, self-reliance and control, to elicit thought, to foster independence, and to implant and exercise a feeling of political responsibility. Government may exert a powerful influence in forming the character of its subjects, not by what it *does*, but by what it *is*—not by the instruction it communicates, but by the exercise which it prompts.

In this world it is so arranged by Him who knows best the structure of our minds, and who cares most for our real and permanent welfare, that the objects at which we aim shall be valuable to us, or worthless, according to the process by which we arrive at them. There are facts and laws, phenomena and relationships, the knowledge of which few would be disposed to underrate—and yet whether that knowledge shall be “power” is made considerably dependent upon the mode by which we have exercised ourselves to reach it. Faith itself is undeserving of the name when it consists in nothing more than a correct apprehension of, and a spontaneous assent to, the doctrines about which it seems to be concerned. All things here, upon which a high estimate may be set, are the result of slow growth, of frequent conflict, of perpetual activity. The

oak, the boast of our forests, is nursed into grandeur, not by years only, but by storms, and the gale which strips it of its summer bravery, and makes it groan and creak under the outbursts of its fury, is as necessary to impart to it the qualities which characterise it, as the gradual increase of its age. So virtue is not virtue, or, at least, is not to be trusted as such, until its muscles have been strained again and again in grappling with temptation. Christianity proceeds upon the assumption, that it is not what goes into the mind, but what comes out of it, that is to be looked at with a view to a sound judgment of human character and worth.

The primary object of revealed truth is to assist mind in unfolding *its own* powers, to surround it with a congenial atmosphere, to supply it with a rich and fertile soil. The facts, all glorious as they are, which it presents, the doctrines, so new and yet so natural, which it founds upon these facts, the principles which it inculcates, as in harmony with both, and the splendid rewards it opens up as consequent upon conformity to these principles, all serve to impress upon the mind the conclusion, that, in the eye of God, nothing is too costly, nothing too complicated, which will secure a healthy development of the faculties and susceptibilities with which he has endowed us. His whole plan of government, in relation to mankind, recognises the absolute necessity, in order to their eventual welfare, of throwing

human nature upon *its own resources*, scourging it forth from the Paradise of ease in which it would fain dwell, and bidding it subdue by labour the earth which is to nourish it, and "by the sweat of its brow to eat bread." There is none of that puling sentimentality in the Gospel which ever and anon interposes to spare man the necessity of taking care of himself, none of that womanly but misplaced tenderness which would keep the world tied to the apron-string of a superior authority. "Go forth," is its command—"go, put out your strength! give play to what is in you! seek that exercise which experience proves to be best adapted to minister to the budding forth of your inmost self!" Man cannot well be *shaped* save as he *grows*. There must be vitality in him, there must be all the activities and movements of life, in order to furnish the substratum of valuable character.

It seems to us, that the STRUCTURE of civil government should thus far harmonize with great providential principles and with the general spirit of Christianity; it should be such as not merely to allow, but to invite, the freest exercise of all the powers in its subjects, the constant employment of which conduces to the formation of sound character. It should not merely place in the way no obstacle to the growth of a manly independence, but should itself, if possible, call out to stated activity, and train for efficient service,

those mental and moral elements of worth, the abundance of which in a community is the surest guarantee for its prosperity and happiness. Just as our merchant service is deemed of paramount importance, as providing a cradle for British seamen, so may the very forms and processes of constitutional government be rendered tributary to the training up of a people to self-reliance, forethought, industry, and patriotism, to the cultivation in them of those habits of mind and dispositions of heart, the full maturity of which is to be identified with national greatness, security, and worth.

Our Saxon ancestors based most of their civil institutions upon a recognition of the importance of making its forms subservient to the begetting and training of national character. The rudiments of political rule, which they handed down to their children, are so many rough concretions of the abstract idea, that not only *what* men do, but *how* they do it, is of consequence; and that nations, like individuals, in order to the attainment of eminence, must have every opportunity afforded them for the use and discipline of the powers bestowed upon them by divine Providence, ere they can reach the full stature of political manhood. By rapid strides we are departing from their maxims and practices of wisdom, substituting a system of centralization, which dispenses with individual care and responsibility, for those municipal and local arrange-

ments which enlisted the best energies of the largest number of men—drawing, in a word, all authority to a focus, instead of diffusing it over as wide as possible a surface. Christianity has laid it as an obligation upon man to think for his fellow-man as well as for himself—to govern his own impulses with a view to the advantage of those by whom he is surrounded, and so to pursue his own course amidst the shifting scenes of life, as to strengthen, instead of destroy, the sympathies implanted to him by the hand of his Maker. There can be no good reason why the form of civil government should not coincide with this benign and wise intent, why all subjects should not be trained to *rule* as well as to *obey*, to take thought for the community as well as to receive protection from it, to exercise prudence, sagacity, self-denial, sense of justice, and consciousness of responsibility, by participating in the making and executing of laws, as well as deference to authority, submission to the “powers that be,” and willing acquiescence in all the legitimate arrangements of magistracy. If power be an instrument which it is dangerous for man to use, then would it be well to break it up, as much as possible, into the smallest portions—if it be a privilege, the monopoly of it by any section or class is palpably unjust.

No. XIII.

ROOM FOR EXPANSION.

ONE more, and only one more, glance we propose to take at revealed truth, for the purpose of finding guidance to correct views respecting the STRUCTURE of civil government. Some principles have already been found in Christianity, as, we think, serving to light our path to a sound conclusion. We have seen that State machinery, in order that it may work harmoniously with the genius of the Gospel, should be efficient for securing its avowed design, should concentrate upon its object the best and most wisely-adapted means within reach, should pay regard to man rather than to the circumstances in which he may chance to be placed, and should give fair opportunity for the exercise, by every citizen, of the intellectual and moral powers with which his Maker has endowed him. We now advance one step further. Our purpose is to show that Christianity, aiming as it does at human progress, requires that the structure of government should be such as to afford ample room for social expansion and improvement.

Holy writ may be regarded as the seed of all the moral changes which are destined to mark the advancement of society. As we have often affirmed, Christianity is a life rather than a form—a moving power rather than a mechanism for the application of power. Its few leading principles will go on disclosing wider and wider circles of duty and responsibility as intellect is cultivated, science grows, and human passions are restrained and purified. All the aspects of revealed truth are onwards, upwards, and, in the most significant meaning of that term, heavenwards. Nature and Christianity are alike in this, that they both carry within themselves the promise and the germ of “better things to come.” ’Tis even true physically that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain,” waiting for something hereafter to be consummated. The tiny coral, the puny instrument in the hands of Infinite Wisdom for preparing new and yet ample domains for the habitation of man; the several processes of decay, ending in reproduction of the same matter in a higher form; the connexion between a wise exertion of labour and salubrity of climate, fertility of soil, and average duration of human life; the geometrical ratio at which man’s power over all the elements of nature increases, and according to which facilities for subduing the forces of matter to the purposes of mind are multiplied—these are but specimens of a law which pervades the

visible universe of God, indicating that the structure of earth was originally framed with a view to a progressively improving hereafter, and that, as man becomes more thoroughly imbued with rightness of mind and of heart, the house which the Creator built and furnished for him may be cleansed, beautified, and rendered more commodious, thus adapting it still more nicely to the wants which civilization and religion invariably bring with them.

Divine revelation, however, far surpasses the laws of the material world in the characteristic just glanced at. It not merely admits of, but it invites and rewards, progress, both individual and social. Its truths and principles, hidden in the heart of a community, work until they assimilate all things to themselves. Christianity, as a system, is utterly incompatible with the spirit of oriental conservation—the feeling against change which cherishes with blind superstition the most hideous abuses, as one will sometimes see earwigs preserved in amber. It has no sympathy, whatever, with the policy which sets a chain of sentinels round about the walks of mind, to order it back whenever it discovers a wish to pass beyond certain generally recognised limits. Awe may be excited, doubtless, by the sight of glaciers, in which we look upon nature, as it were, smitten with catalepsy, and all outward movement arrested by the irresistible power of cold, but we

prefer greatly, for everyday life and enjoyment, the breathing, changing, multiform landscape, although some of the vicissitudes which affect it, render it anything but pleasureable to ourselves. So veneration may be awakened by what is old and almost immutable in pictures of society handed down to us in sacred writ, whilst the prevailing tendency of revelation is to prompt to unceasing progress, and, therefore, perpetual novelty.

In truth, although "Time" is styled "the great innovator," the description belongs more properly to Christianity. It came into the world to effect a change in the innermost centre of all human movements, and in the main-spring of all human activities. And right thoroughly has it done its work, hitherto—here quietly and gradually melting down prejudice—there, breaking in pieces, and scattering to the winds of oblivion, adamantine barriers to free intercourse between mind and mind—now, gently insinuating an influence which modifies the entire aspect of society—and anon, putting deep down in the chasms of custom and conventionalism, truths the expansive force of which brings down unexpectedly huge masses of concrete selfishness. Everywhere it is making its plastic energy felt. It touches all things, and whatever it touches it either destroys as an evil, or improves as a good. Science, philosophy, politics, morality, the constitution

and habits of society, the common notions and sentiments of mankind—all confess, for they cannot conceal it, the power which Christianity brings to bear in the development of their latent resources.

Well then! we have, we think, sufficient foot-hold for maintaining the position that the mechanism of civil government, its constitutional form and framework, if constructed in harmony with the principles of revealed truth, must needs be such as readily to admit of expansion and improvement. Organic changes, it is certain, bring with them serious as well as numerous inconveniences. No people can afford a revolution every ten years. The maxim of Poor Richard may hold good in a political sense, "Three moves are as bad as a fire;" and the old proverb is applicable in the same direction, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." But all this only proves how important it is to mould the political constitution of a country upon an original model which will admit of easy enlargement and close adaptation to all the outward circumstances of the people. Forms, as we have elsewhere intimated, exist but with a view to realities, and are not only useless, but positively obstructive and mischievous, when they cease to develop the sentiments they were intended to express. "The laws of the Medes and Persians," unbending and unchangeable, will harmonize well enough with an economy of stereotyped religion, but, under

the "perfect law of liberty," it is necessary to provide suitable facilities for gradual and uninterrupted progress. National institutions should be such as grow up spontaneously from the national mind, or, if, like the snake, a people must periodically cast their skin, it is well that they should be able to do so without violent internal convulsions and spasmodic agonies. In a word, the *structure* of civil government, framing our judgment of it in accordance with the principles of the New Testament, ought to be perfectly compatible with uniform social progress, ought to give room to the community who live under it for indefinite expansion and improvement.

No. XIV.

FUNCTIONS OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

WE intend next, in pursuance of the plan already laid down, to discuss the FUNCTIONS of civil government, and to view them in the light of Christian principles. We crave the indulgence of our readers a little longer. The topics claiming notice, in this department of our question, are various as well as interesting, and inasmuch as all of them belong to the category of practical politics, and touch more or less closely everyday interests, we trust we may succeed in retaining to the close of the present course, the willing attention of our readers.

We cast a hurried glance, in the first place, over the ground we are proposing more at leisure to survey, and endeavour to arrange the functions of civil government according to "a natural system of classification." This done, we shall have a clear understanding of the precise work we have to perform. The plot of ground having been roughly marked off into convenient divisions, we may, perhaps, set about the details of our labour with a more lucid intelligence, and, as the consequence of it, a heartier goodwill.

It is quite obvious, then, that the State, regarded as the organ for interpreting the mind of the people in all matters touching the protection of life, liberty, and property, must busy itself, in the first instance, with whatever is necessary for its own maintenance and efficiency. Just as an individual, be the ultimate purpose of his life what it may, must secure for himself, in order to it, a sufficient subsistence, and must make *being* the *substratum* of *doing*, so civil government must provide for the adequate sustentation of that external framework of official agency, which is to the object of magistracy what the body is to the spirit. The eyes which are to watch every movement in the heart of society, and detect every deed of trespass upon acknowledged rights, the feet which are to be swift in the pursuit of guilt, the arm which should arrest the wrong-doer, and render all resistance hopeless, the head which is to frame rules for the guidance of the community, to pronounce when and where those rules have been departed from, and to apportion the punishment due to the offence, the entire body, in fact, born of human wit and need, to which is made over the onerous task of defining and administering justice for the rest of the nation, must be nourished into vigour, and supported in due ease, if anything like practical activity and utility are expected from it. Hence governments have always been most careful to

tend their own maintenance, and, like some individuals who, instead of eating to live, live only to eat, have often shown themselves far more solicitous for support as an end, than as a means to an end. It remains true, nevertheless, that their primary functions will be such as terminate upon their own well-being. And these divide themselves into two main branches, the collection and distribution of appropriate aliment, in other words, *taxation* and *patronage*, the acquisition of a suitable income, and the appointment of a wisely-organised staff of officers. Both these branches we shall submit to the light of Christian principles.

We come next to those functions of civil government which respect the adjustment of all disturbed relationships between subject and subject. We have already limited the object of government to the protection of individuals from every trespass upon what is theirs, and of the entire community from all aggression by other nations. Of this two-fold end, unquestionably, the first in order, as well as in importance is, that which relates to the administration of justice. This, indeed, is the special, and, in a sense, the *only* business of magistracy. It involves, as the slightest reflection will show us, three departments of responsibility. The law must be made and declared, the breach of it must be ascertained, and the penalty of that breach must be enforced. We shall have under notice, therefore,

legislation, or the fixing a standard of social morality; and *administration of law*, which comprises a judgment in each case, upon the fact and amount of deviation, and the assignment and execution of a suitable penalty. Under the last head, the question of capital and secondary punishments will, of course, require to be dealt with. Law, judgment, execution—these three words may serve to marshall all the topics comprised under what may be characterised as the “home duties” of government. A ray or two of light, from the original source of it, let in upon them severally, may exhibit them under new aspects to our thoughts and may excite in our minds a freshness of interest in reference to the whole subject, which may prove as useful as it was unexpected.

Home engagements fulfilled, we look abroad. We follow the subjects of government, first, to those parts of the globe to which they transport with themselves their relationships and duties to the State. Most European governments possess colonies, or outlying dependencies, over the inhabitants of which they exercise some jurisdiction, to whom they extend protection, and from whom, in return, they require allegiance. This opens up to us another class of functions which it will be our duty to examine under the teachings of Christianity. And here, the question of slavery, the doctrine of aboriginal rights, and some cognate subjects,

will present themselves for investigation. It will be our object to show in what respects, and to what ends, the maxims of revealed truth will avail for the guidance of a Colonial Secretariat.

A trespass, however, may be attempted, not merely by individuals upon individual rights, but by nations upon the rights of a community, and to civil governments appertain all the duties of defence. To protect its own subjects from foreign hostility, to maintain their liberties against the aggressions of ambitious potentates, to shield their property from the rapacity of neighbouring States, and to secure their lives from invasion, constitute no trivial a portion of magisterial responsibility. Union is strength, and, in conformity with this maxim, people, taught by necessity, give organization to their combined force, with a view to self-defence. Whilst human nature continues as it is, international differences will be far from infrequent, and they must be ultimately settled either by what is termed *diplomacy*, or by *war*. What Christianity points to on these and similar subjects, we shall seek to ascertain. The oracle, surely, may be consulted with profit, and some advantages derived from a dispassionate survey of the whole ground in the light of New Testament principles.

Such, then, is a bird's eye glimpse at the district of thought over which we are about to pass—rapidly,

indeed, but yet, we hope, leisurely enough for correct and ample observation. The several topics are sufficiently trite, we must needs confess, but the most homely things will bear looking at in new connexions and relationships. We shall do our best to beguile our readers in their companionship with us over an unpromising region; and we earnestly solicit at their hands the candour and patience which in our former labours we never asked in vain.

No. XV.

NECESSARY, BUT NEVER WELCOME.

COME in what mood he will, uncivil or courteous, speak he in whatever tones he may, supplicatory, business-like, or authoritative; ask he for little or for much, a sum exceeding, or falling short of, your previous expectations; the tax-gatherer, like disease or death, is always felt to be intrusive, his visits are never welcome, and however you may esteem the man, you almost wholly lose sight of him in the atmosphere of his odious office. Taxation is universally accounted one of the ills of life, and, by many, not by any means the least of them.

Why is this? How is it that in all ages men have looked upon this necessary portion of their expenditure with feelings so unconsenting? Why is it that, just here, if nowhere else, impatience is the handmaid sent to open the door, and the humble representative of civil government is received, with all the forces of discontent drawn up in reserve, ready to charge upon him, if only an ordinary pretext can be found for giving him battle? Other expenses, even where they

can ill be met, are faced without resentment. The pinch of a trade-demand may make us wince, but does not anger us. But the tax-gatherer, whether he dips into a full or an empty purse, seldom fails to rouse one's constitutional irritation. If there is ill-nature in us, a call for Queen's taxes will be sure to fetch it out. There must be some reason for this, something more akin to justice than a natural disinclination to be ruled. And, in fact, when the matter comes to be fairly inquired into, a sufficient cause soon presents itself. Taxation, as hitherto enforced, in all countries and all times, with exceptions so insignificant as serve only to prove the rule, has been robbery under the sanction of law, the appropriation by organized strength of vast amounts which it cannot fairly claim, a trespass upon individual rights made under cover of public necessity, a miserable abuse of delegated power for selfish, and essentially, private purposes. This is, in truth, the chief reason for the universal discomposure excited by a demand for taxes. Men may not be able to put their finger upon the precise items of a public charge which constitute sheer extortion, but, unhappily, they have never been without such an aggregate of proven wrong in this matter, as to justify their paying the demands of civil government with much the same feeling as they would pay black-mail, with the suppressed indignation which always lurks, like a maggot

in the core of a fair-looking fruit, in the heart of that obedience which is rendered by a weaker to the unreasonable summons of a stronger power.

It may seem, at first sight, a gratuitous misapplication of revealed truth, to try to bring taxation within the range of its principles. There are, no doubt, many who will classify the effort in the same rank of folly, as those frequent attempts, in days almost gone by, to regulate the facts of science, by the supposed dogmas of scripture. Political economy may haply claim to be exempt from the supervision of Christianity, and to be no more subject to its doctrines or its precepts, than the most self-evident arithmetical truth, or mathematical axiom. We must take leave to dispute the assumption. We believe that, without resorting to strained interpretations of New Testament utterances, and without doing violence to the dictates of common sense, it is quite possible, and would be highly advantageous to submit the process of public taxation to the test of great Christian principles, and to assimilate that necessary function of civil government to the spirit of the truth which we professed to have received from heaven. In other words, we can conceive of a magistrate, aiming, even in the adjustment of his financial proceedings, to give full scope and development to the exalted morality which he finds in the gospel. If, for example, He who was born that He might "witness

unto the Truth," were formally to draw up a plan for securing to the State, a sufficient pecuniary maintenance, we can easily imagine that, in several important respects, taxation, under His superintendence, would differ very materially from the taxation of modern times.

Details, in the present instance, will not, of course, be looked for, could not, in fact, be appropriately introduced. Christianity, in this department, as well as every other, would leave them to fall into their right places, under broad general principles. Those principles, we apprehend, would be few and simple, nay, we suspect they would all resolve themselves into one. *Equity* as the *substratum*—purpose, amount, and mode, as its several modifications, would, perhaps, comprehend the whole subject as seen in the light of revealed truth. Taxation, in order to coincide with Christianity, must be an embodiment of a soul of fairness, fairness to its own professed object, fairness to the community as a whole, and fairness to each of the interests, classes, and individuals of which the nation is composed.

Civil government owes a duty to itself. Its main care should be to realize the end for which it exists. All its means should be in direct connexion with that end. None of the resources, at its own disposal, should be wasted. Taxes constitute the sinews of its strength, and, like as a man's vitality and energy, may

be squandered away in mere self-indulgence, leaving him so much the less for the performance of duty, so money, the life-blood of magistracy, may be thrown away upon purposes wholly distinct from, and often opposed to, the primary object of government. And just in proportion as the State is prodigal in its means, for other ends than those it was created to attain, just in the same proportion will it be poor and parsimonious, in reference to its legitimate business. As the sums lost at the gaming-table are withdrawn from trade, so taxes devoted to the bolstering up of separate interests and classes, are either exacted without necessity, or filched from what is due to the protection of life, property, and freedom. Now, Christianity would seem to enjoin a spirit of equity in this matter. The genius of it, if we could imagine it to address itself to magistracy on this question of taxation, would say thus much :—"You exist with a view to the protection of your own subjects, you claim taxes that you may be able to make good your avowed design. See to it, then, that you are fair to your own purpose. Rob it not of means which it requires, merely that this or that irrelevant wish may be gratified. What you take from the subject, take for the fulfilment of your own obligations, not for the advantage of such and such parties. In short, do nothing but what you pretend to do. Tax your people, that *they* may have the high-

est amount of protection, and the easiest access to justice, not that a dynasty may be befriended, a throne emblazoned with splendours, or an aristocracy maintained in dignified idleness. You pretend to a certain object, be fair to that object in the charges you fix upon your subjects. God's truth allows neither States nor individuals to 'obtain money under false pretences.'"

Fairness, however, may be observed in fixing the amount of taxation, as well as defining the purposes for which it is levied, and, in this direction, will have respect to the entire community. There may be extravagant methods of attaining ends admitted to be perfectly legitimate in themselves, profuse expenditure when a moderate one might suffice, a want of conscientiousness, and a carelessness of calculation, which, when large sums of money, not our own, are to be dealt with, are not commonly thought disreputable, even when they wander beyond the landmarks of morality, a contempt, in fine, of those economical maxims and modes of appliance, which in cases of individual development we characterise as dishonesty. Now all funds beyond what are strictly necessary, abstracted from the pocket of the community, and applied to sustain the machinery of government, are funds wrongfully diverted from productive channels to an unproductive one. Society is thus defrauded. The proportion of manure, to which money has been likened, necessary

to give due fertility to the soil, which is withdrawn from the purpose to which it is naturally destined, is, in fact, a destruction of just so much produce as its proper application would have added to the whole amount. Civil government is kept up in vigour only by the absorption of so much concentrated labour. Thews and sinews, and animal spirits are, ultimately, the materials of which its machinery is constructed. Such resources as are set apart for its maintenance are to be regarded as the equivalent of so much life; and of life a community, at any given time, has but a limited amount. To draw more largely upon it for ends which are not in themselves reproductive, is doing on a great scale, what he would be guilty of on a small one, who should wantonly lower a patient's strength by periodical blood-letting. Extravagant taxation, reduced to its last precipitate, is so much life annihilated, or, to speak plainly, so much murder; and the modern history of this country, is an awful comment on the remark—war has killed its thousands; taxation its tens of thousands.

But, perhaps, the amount of taxation, however disproportioned to the actual necessities of government, is of less importance than the mode in which it is levied. It may be true that all imposts, direct or indirect, fall in the end upon labour; but it is also true that very much of their pressure depends upon the

angle, if so we may describe it, at which they lean upon society. The needle, which may be almost unperceived upon the palm of the hand, may pierce and torture it when presented perpendicularly. The collection of taxes from the seed, cannot be the same in effect as from the produce. Materials, processes, industry, skill, results of all kinds, natural and artificial, may be mulcted so near their original source, by legislative unfairness, as to destroy them altogether. And this appears to be a fault, attaching more or less to all indirect taxation. Labour should have arrived at its maturity, realized property, before being subjected to the tolls of civil government. The Jewish law, even, which forbid the taking the bird with her eggs, enounces the general principle that we should not destroy good things in their bud. Christianity elaborates the same law from a merely negative into a positive form, and teaches us to foster with care and tenderness the beginnings of good, wherever they are found. We take it, therefore, that taxation, in order to harmonize with the spirit of revealed truth, should be levied with a view only to the real and legitimate objects of civil government, should be limited in amount to the necessities of the case, and in mode should be so direct, as to involve no heedless destruction of property, which, in its final sense, is life.

No. XVI.

DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICE.

WHAT the blood is to the animal frame, that, as we have seen, the taxes are to civil government; and the limbs, muscles, and organs of the one are aptly answered by the several departments and offices of the other. Life requires for its development some form or other of organized matter, and the will of a nation respecting the due preservation of person, property, and rights, can be practically expressed and carried into effect only by means of a corps of qualified functionaries. All that relates to the choice, the employment, and the reward of these national servants, is virtually settled by the topmost of the political authorities, who, assuredly, would do well in the discharge of this item of his responsibility, to seek counsel in the inspired oracles.

The distribution of office, or in a single word, patronage, constitutes the most important function of civil government, and not a whit less difficult than it is important. Sore, indeed, must be the trial of the chief minister who aims to regulate his appointments

by a conscientious regard to the fitness of the aspirants. Every vacancy of importance creates, of course, a rush of competitors from all quarters, and in the scramble for a decent post, every effort which promises success is deemed fair by the struggling applicants. Artifices which in other walks of life would be eschewed as dishonest, servilities which in any other pursuit would be stigmatised as mean, influences appealed to and brought to bear which *can* have weight only with what is weak or corrupt in the character of a ruler, bribes as various in kind as ingenuity, sharpened by desire, can invent, some political, some of a much grosser nature ; all these are resorted to without scruple, in order to secure the object in this species of enterprise. In truth, so common is it to dispose of office, high and low, civil, military, legal, and clerical, according to the influence of those who ask, rather than the qualifications of those for whom request is made, that the term "patronage," when used in connexion with civil government, has come to imply the making of appointments without reference to the fitness of the party promoted, and the distribution of office, as introducing the fortunate competitor to a living to be enjoyed, rather than assigning to him a post of labour to be filled, and of responsibility to be discharged.

Perhaps, no country on earth can exhibit a longer catalogue of diversified evils as the result of an abuse

of government patronage than our own. Their name is Legion. They are of all sorts, sizes, shapes, and hues. They affect, more or less, all classes, but chiefly the poor and the unprotected. They are direct and indirect. Nay, they are at once so numerous and so various, as to defy computation. Why, to a very considerable extent, posts are created with an exclusive view to the wages for which they are to furnish a sort of pretext, and magistracy strengthens its own hands against its subjects by devising new tasks for itself as the safest and most feasible method of multiplying its patronage. Offices are invented, like so many blank cheques, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the sums written upon them, which may give them a value to the holders. Hence, a show of work becomes necessary. Government, needing all its hands, not, indeed, for the due administration of justice, but for the easy maintenance of its own foolish assumptions, becomes fussy and meddlesome, encroaches upon the domains of individual and social responsibility, enervates and paralyzes by driving into disuse, private enterprise and energies; and above and beyond all, furnishes motives to its myriads of paid functionaries, to perpetuate the wants which they were appointed to supply, and to screen from all change the political machinery which, to use a vulgar figure, "brings grist to the mill." The mischief increases day by day, and

must increase. We are threatened with being overrun by an army of locusts to devour every green thing. New departments of civil government are being opened, that they may be filled with fresh swarms of placemen; and science, philosophy, and even religion, are feed to puff off each novel undertaking of our rulers as one which cannot fail of commending itself at once to the judgment and to the heart of genuine patriotism.

This, however, is not by any means all that provokes complaint. Office devised for men, instead of men selected for office, is bad enough; but would that this were the worst. The system into which we have fallen gives us, to manage too great a variety of our affairs and interests, not ignorance and incapacity merely, but, occasionally, restless irritability, or vain-glorious presumption. We are called upon, not seldom, alas! to witness, as the natural fruit of Government patronage, mistakes which are not less pernicious in their consequences than they are revolting to a sense of propriety. Drowsy indolence yawning over great interests, involving, it may be, the welfare of myriads, just when activity and energy are most loudly called for; stupidity, with a smirk of self-satisfaction upon its countenance, setting about feats which are as easily accomplished, and spread ruin as widely, as piercing the dykes of a low country, and letting in upon it an inundation; intense selfishness carving out its own ends with an

utter disregard of the miseries which it inflicts ; low-minded ambition crawling up to eminences over the ruins of many a family's prospects ; or touchy and petulant temper kindling the flames of war to gratify a whim of impatience, or to revenge a fancied affront ; a careless and unprincipled distribution of office has exhibited, in our own land, every one of these most deplorable results. It becomes, consequently, a matter of unspeakable importance, to bring the patronage of government, if possible, under the regulation of sound principles ; and those principles, we think, may be discovered in the New Testament.

Singleness of purpose is a main characteristic of Christianity. It points out its own object with perfect distinctness, and marches towards it as directly as possible. Intrigue, duplicity, circumvention, prevarication, every aspect under which falsehood can present itself, it repudiates with indignant condemnation. What it does, it must do openly ; or if it resort to guile, that guile must be harmless in itself, and benevolent in its end. It cannot walk arm-in-arm with a sneaking pretence, nor abet by any part of its demeanour, a practical lie. But if this spirit were to run through the appointment of men to office in connexion with civil government, how much mischief might be prevented, and what a startling change would it work in the existing system ! Were intellectual and moral

qualification the sole passport to public office, and were office created and preserved with no other view than to the conservation of order by the administration of justice, the whole edifice of patronage, as we see it, would be overturned from its base. All that we have pointed out as evil would be swept away. Truthfulness would scourge every insidious and creeping pretence out of the temple of politics. Sense of responsibility would assign employment only where character had been duly investigated, and had satisfactorily met every inquiry. And the encomium—"Well done, good and faithful servant," would become comparatively common. There needs no profundity, nor prolixity of remark to set forth the general principles in conformity with which civil government should appoint to office, or in other words engage its servants. An honest reference of means to the end is all that can be required. One ray of light from a conscientious heart will show a statesman's path from end to end of the now intricate question of patronage, without leaving a single insurmountable difficulty in his way.

No. XVII.

LAW-MAKING.

FOLKS in general are wonderfully liable to be imposed upon by words. Indeed, language is one of those taskmasters of the mind, respecting which it may be said without injustice, that they reap where they have not sown, and gather where they have not strawed. And there are some words which, like persons, by a sort of quiet assumption, swagger uncommonly until their real merits and meaning are inquired into and made out. Of these, Law is one; we might almost say the foremost; and wherever it appears, it struts with an air so pretending, that one is tempted to conclude flatteringly respecting its birth and station.

Law, however,—law, we mean, that expresses the will of civil governments, is respectable chiefly as the result of a miserable conventionalism. Obedience to it comes, for the most part, from a nobler stock than does itself. Law is but a *parvenu* in the high spheres of humanity—a snob, to use the slang of the day—an upstart which puts on a pretence very far beyond its own deservings. The crowd of men may bow to

it, and do it homage. Even the best and bravest of our race, in the fervour of their moral feeling, which, like the poet's eye,

———"in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth,"

may see in law an abstraction of majesty, power, will, to which they not unwillingly render humble obeisance. But for all that, it is essentially a vulgar thing. It represents nothing very exalted at best; ordinarily, something closely allied to the mean and sordid; and it is in its own nature coarse, heartless, and even revolting. The characteristic meaning of law is, "You shall." Law, as framed by civil government, is equivalent to the doubled fist of an organized community, giving force to the will of its dominant class. It is the expression of might—the might of combination over the weakness of isolation; and even when its hoarse and husky voice is uplifted only in the behalf of justice, it scarcely rises into dignity, but remains, in every position, the accredited agent of a nation's physical force; neither less nor more.

Such is human nature, and such the constitution of society, that there are occasions when, with every show of the *ultima ratio*, "You shall" must be said to each of its members. Law, like a life-preserver, is what men are better pleased to parade than use; but then, whilst the highway of life is infested with ruffians, it

cannot safely be dispensed with. Experience teaches us, that for the present, at least, we cannot do without it. Civil governments must continue to express themselves in the imperative mood, and to enforce compliance with their prescriptions by the exhibition and exaction of appropriate penalties. They cannot do their work, nor reach their end, without the aid of gyves and manacles, stocks, whips, and stone walls surmounted with *chevaux-de-frize*. Nations are compelled, alas! to do business in the compulsory line; and where reason fails to lead mind into virtue, law must beat conduct into decency. There can be no doubt about this. We may lament the necessity which is put upon us, but, hitherto, we have been quite unable to get rid of it.

Christianity evinces no very high estimate of the value of Law as an agent of good to the social world. It teaches its disciples, indeed, to pay it due respect, not chiefly "for wrath, but for conscience sake." The obedience which law *makes* is the very lowest and rudest development of moral nature, if, in fact, there is any morality whatever in it. Christianity comes hither to supersede it, and to substitute inward motives for outward restraints. It seeks to replace "you shall" by "you may," to exalt into a privilege what before could be regarded only as an obligation, to lead the way to order, justice, and tranquillity, rather than to

drive men into it by an appeal to their fears. The spirit of law is mandatory; the spirit of Christianity is alluring. "Do and live" is enjoined by the one; "Come and live" is the invitation of the other. The characteristic of the first is force from without, converging from all quarters upon the instinctive selfishness of man. That of the last is light kindled within, diffusing itself spontaneously, and by a law of its own nature, in every direction, and beautifying everything by its own beams. In the one case, authority enjoins; in the other, goodness woos and wins. There is all the difference between the two systems of influence that there is between pressure and attraction, between the uttered command of a master to his bondsman, and the expressed will of a husband to his bride.

Looking upon law-making—*legislation*—in the light of revealed truth, we should esteem it a much simpler thing than, in the hands of philosophic statesmen, it is seen to be. If the essence of law is "you shall," if, adopting the most liberal theory of government, it expresses in an authoritative form the mind of a majority only; if, in all cases, its ultimate appeal must be to physical force, then is it perfectly clear, that Christianity sanctions law-making no further than absolute necessity warrants. "The powers that be," represent what they may—the will of an individual, an order, a class, or a majority of a people, have no right to resort

to "you shall," and the show of the fist, in support of every whim which may happen to possess them. The design of the gospel is to elevate us from the ground of law to that of voluntary obedience; to place us in such a position as that our conduct shall express, as we have elsewhere said, not the response of a weaker to the summons of a stronger power, but the willing subjection which true love renders to true loveliness. And it cannot be in harmony with the spirit of revelation, that, at every turn of life, and especially in those walks of it in which free choice is necessary to moral discipline, a dominant power should stop short our responsibility with such phrases as, "You must do this;" "You must not do that." Such coercion, destructive as it is of moral probation, ought never to be resorted to, save where the very existence of social order demands it; and Christianity, rightly interpreted, decides against any widening of the sphere prescribed by itself for law, namely, that it should be "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well."

Legislation is, as will have been gathered from the foregoing observations, the marking out, by men chosen for that purpose, of the boundaries within which a community is determined to carry out its own intentions by force, if need be. If men would but carry this idea of it in their minds, they would, perhaps,

be less hasty and careless than now they are in piling statute upon statute. There are, indeed, very few of our purposes, as individuals, which we should feel justified, either in our own behalf, or in the behalf of society, good morals, truth, or religion, in employing brute power to accomplish. And what we might not do as individuals, supposing society reduced to its primitive elements, we may not do as political parties, state factions, or even national majorities. Legislation is not a *panacea*, to be flown to on all manifestations of apparent unhealthiness; but a specific, capable of meeting and curing a special class only of social disease. They who, in the business of statesmanship, apply it as an universal remedy, are quacks, utterly unworthy of confidence, whose power of mischief, unhappily, is too extensive to be computed, and who use that power without care for consequences. But the individual who puffs off his *nostrum* as able to drive away every bodily ailment, does not violate the principles of Christianity more flagrantly than does he who aims to cure all social disorders by legislative means.

We have dwelt upon this feature of our subject, to the exclusion of others, because right views in this direction will be accompanied, as a matter of course by just sentiments in several others. Let a man but keep his way along the main road, and he will have a good notion of the bearing of every lane and byeway

which branches out of it. When a legislator deals with law as with physical force, under the conviction that Christianity admits as little of it as possible, he need hardly be reminded that he should be impartial, dispensing equal justice to all parties, and winking at oppression in none. The summit on which we would have him take his stand is sufficiently elevated to admit of descrying from it, mapped out with accuracy, the whole region of a law-maker's responsibilities and duties.

No. XVIII.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

CHRISTIANITY, as a remedial system, reckons as one of the brightest jewels in its crown, its universality of purpose and of adaptation. It addresses itself to man as man, to man in his present fallen condition, to man in all the outward circumstances which may modify his lot. Its offers are all pervaded by a spirit of impartial beneficence. Its walks of spontaneous compassion are hedged about by none of those lines of conventional distinction which, in the ordinary arrangements of life, separate class from class. It visits, and visits to bless, with equal alacrity, the unlettered and the erudite, the honoured and the down-trodden, the poor and the rich, the sorrowing and the joyful, the bond and the free. It takes no note of the accidents which serve to individualize us, but approaches us by those avenues to the soul which are common to us all. Like the air we breathe, it reposes upon the lowest places of society, as well as bathes with freshness the mountain tops. Like the light of day, it enters the low-roofed hut, and the chamber of wasting sickness,

with as much gladness as into the noble's mansion, or the palace of a king. For all it has the same tone of kindness. To all it speaks in the same accents of faithful warning. Its firm gentleness is never laid aside. It knows no favouritism. And if, hitherto, the whole race of man has not rejoiced in its life-awakening beams, the reason must be sought in the hindrances and interventions of human selfishness, not in its own reservation of its sympathies. Our shutting up ourselves, or each other, in utter darkness, does not prove that the glorious sun, whose pathway is in the heavens, shines not for all who dwell upon the face of the earth.

Civil governments exist mainly, we might almost say exclusively, for the administration of justice. They are, or ought to be, emphatically, the defenders of every individual's rights. Their service is most wanted where trespass is most easy. The weak, the powerless, they whose *own things*, whatever they may be, lie most exposed to depredation by every inconsiderate passer-by, who have no private means of protection, no opportunity for making their voice heard, no social influence, none of the appliances of moral force which may be brought to bear against transgressors by the more fortunate classes; these are the men who stand in most need of justice; and, alas, these, too, are the men whom governments, as they exist, almost invariably leave to right themselves if they can. Much of the

evil may originate in that partiality of legislation which, like the stream from the fountain, necessarily, because naturally, wells up from a tainted source, a class-chosen house of representatives. But not a little of it is to be attributed to those executive contrivances which, consulting the advantage of the administrators of law in preference to the protection of those in whose behalf they are appointed to act, place justice at such a height, as to be far beyond the reach of all who cannot go up to her mounted upon a sufficiency of pecuniary means. In theory it may be true that our tribunals are equally and impartially open to all; but so long as law is a mystery more profound than even the black art, and whilst all its processes are made so intricate, as to place every subject at the mercy of an interpreter and a guide, so long shall we have to deplore that the administration of justice by civil governments is a boon offered only to a class, and that class the least considerable in number, the least exposed to wrong, and the most competent to find or force reparation, of all who own allegiance to "the powers that be."

We will not commit the injustice of affirming, or of leaving it to be implied, that the cumbrous mechanism contrived by most governments for the administration of justice, which renders the working of it so expensive to the suitor, as to make it a forbidden

luxury to the poor, must be ascribed wholly to the selfishness of power in human hands. Something, unquestionably, must be set down to the account of the insurmountable defectiveness of all our institutions, and to the limitations by which all social possibilities are bounded. But we think we may in strict truthfulness assert, that were the heart in its right place, its pulsations would be more regular, and would reach with comparative ease the extremities of the system. If, in the framing of our laws, if, in the constitution of the machinery by which they are dispensed, if, in the appointment and the maintenance of the officers to whom this business is entrusted, the one end were kept steadily in view, as Christianity dictates, of righting the wronged, of shielding the weak, of opening a refuge for the otherwise defenceless, of ministering succour to all whose position in society lays them open to the wiles of fraud, or the irruptions of imperious selfishness, then would human ingenuity discover means of surmounting most of the difficulties which now beset the subject. Before a determined spirit, and a loving heart, the "lion in the way" would speedily retire. The great evil is that, in these days of civilization, man's rights are limited pretty much to his pecuniary acquisitions, and that the protection of his wealth is regarded as far more important than the protection of his just liberties. Hence the

poor are treated as though they could have no occasion for seeking justice, as having nothing whatever to defend, and therefore nothing to gain at the hands of law.

The very nature of our theme, however, and the sacred light in which we are attempting to view it, forbid us to indulge a one-sided spirit. In ordinary times there may be little danger of rank and wealth, merely as such, being denied that justice which is as much their claim as that of the poorest member of the community. But it will sometimes happen, as the natural reaction of a long course of oppression, that men of the purest intentions and most praiseworthy conduct, come under a sort of public proscription, simply because they belong to a once-dominant class. Few as are the instances in which this spirit reaches the judgment seat, it not the less becomes us to frown upon it in all its nascent proportions. Our own times witness the uprising and growth of a new form of injustice, a spurious and mawkish sentimentalism, which can discern in poverty nothing but virtue, a zeal for the destitute and the ignorant which is blind to their vices, and which panders to their intensest selfishness, a cant which assumes a tone of generosity, pity, and charity, but only in behalf of the physically unfortunate. All sins originating in the low places of society are dealt with leniently, as venial errors. The

whisper of flattery is breathed into the ear of "the people," the "sons of toil," as though it equally becomes those who utter it, and those for whom it is intended. And, unhappily, the thing is contagious; it may hereafter affect public opinion itself; and the matter to be feared is lest, when every subject of the realm shall have attained his political rights, the poison now at work may be found to have unfitted him for the righteous use of them. But the wronged are the wronged, whether they be rich or poor; and to the one as well as to the other a trespass is an infringement upon that which is his due. Christianity awards justice to all alike, without heeding their external condition; but it sanctions retaliation as little when resorted to by the many as by the few. The feeling we condemn may, for aught we know, indicate warmth of heart, but we doubt it. Its sympathies are linked with a class rather than with humanity, and in a day of triumph would prompt, we fear, to an indiscriminate indulgence of the popular taste.

Justice, let it never be forgotten, is that which assigns to every man *his own*, and all the apparatus, forms, offices, proceedings, necessary to the administration of justice should constitute the variously-membered body of which this idea should be the ruling spirit. Quirks, stratagems, surprises, regard for the temper of the age, the known will of those high in authority, or

the supposed safety of time-honoured institutions, are only disturbing influences when allowed to come between the judgment-seat and the bar. To pronounce upon the facts in each case, carefully elicited, and to declare the law in relation to them, is the proper business of those to whom the Chief Magistrate and the Imperial Legislature, have committed the dispensation of justice. And as temper ought never to be allowed a vote in the ultimate decision, so neither ought natural sensibility. In the discipline of a wayward world, the severities of Providence are oftentimes the most striking illustrations of a far-seeing love; and, in the conduct of civil government, want of firmness is sometimes a deadly infliction of wrong upon society. Where the state of the law is such, that common humanity revolts against carrying its penalties into effect, it is clear that the law itself calls aloud for change; but wherever, assuming the law to be conceived fairly, the investigation to have been conducted conscientiously, and the decision to have been arrived at unhesitatingly, wrong has been traced to any subject of civil government, compassion must stand by, weeping if need be, and justice must unfalteringly mete out to the wrong-doer his apportioned meed of punishment. The "power" is "ordained of God" for this very purpose, and if he discharge aright his responsible trust, "he beareth not the sword in vain."

No. XIX.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS.

FROM the "Administration of Justice," upon which we dealt in the last paper of the present series, we pass on to notice the execution of penalties. These will naturally class themselves into two divisions—Capital and Secondary. To each we may usefully devote a separate paper.

It will be proper for us, before we proceed, to recall to the minds of our readers the general plan upon which we are attempting to pursue our inquiries, and to point out the manner in which it will affect our investigation of the subject in hand. The question is not whether capital punishments are, or are not, forbidden by the express injunctions of Christianity. It is not whether there may, or may not be, certain states of society in which the punishment of death may not be legitimately resorted to, with a view to the preservation of social order. What we wish to ascertain is, the ultimate tendency of Christian principles as they bear upon capital punishments; the considerations which the awful truths of revelation suggest, the new

light in which they place the problem to be solved, and the practical conclusions to which they inevitably lead a reflective mind, and a believing heart.

We see no evidence, fairly deducible from the tenor of the Gospel, that where it can be proved that there is no alternative between the disorganization of society and the infliction of death upon such as aim to produce it, we are shut up to the choice of the former. We cannot, therefore, coincide with those who maintain the absolute inviolability of human life. He who has drawn around every individual certain limits, intended to shield him from the violence of his fellow-man, and who guards those limits by providential laws, as mysterious as they are efficacious, has also, in a manner equally solemn, ordained the maintenance of social order, and has committed to civil governments the execution of this high trust. To us, therefore, it appears incontestable, that whatever power is necessary to the discharge of this grave responsibility, though it were power over life itself, must have been given with the commission which invested the magistrate with the sword of justice. Every degree of violence put forth against the person of man may else be set down as repugnant to Christianity, and thus penalty for crime would be wholly precluded in the present world; for it can be as satisfactorily proved, that Christianity is opposed to violence, as to the taking away of life.

But revealed truth was given to man for his guidance to immortality, by refashioning his heart, and, thereby, reforming his conduct. Hence, its truths and injunctions are to be received by him, primarily, in his individual capacity. In that capacity he is to abstain from revenge, to eschew violence, to submit to injury, to "bless them that curse" him, and "to pray for them that despitefully entreat" him. But, unless the administration of justice in this world is a thing alien to the Divine will, which surely none can pretend, men sustaining authority as magistrates cannot, in that relationship, act upon the same principle which binds them as private individuals. Governments must punish where punishment is due. "The sword," whatever that may imply, which is taken from the individual, is handed over to the ruler, with the command that "he bears it not in vain;" and it is clear that, in the execution of his trust, other considerations must have weight with him than those which would avail to shape his own personal conduct.

We have said thus much with a view to guard against what appears to us to be a misapplication of Scripture truth. Even in support of a righteous cause, it is not only unwise, but improper, to press forward evidence which will not stand the test of severe examination. And, in the present case, it is quite unnecessary. We may reach the end by more legi-

timate means, and of these means we shall now avail ourselves.

It is impossible, then, for a student of revealed truth to be otherwise than deeply impressed with the light in which Christianity exhibits to him the life of man. How mysterious the tie which connects him with the world! What awful relationships does he sustain! With what wondrous capabilities is he endowed! How vast, how infinitely momentous, are the interests suspended upon the right employment of his faculties, during his brief sojourn upon earth! The complexion of his eternity is made dependent upon his use of time. Within that little space, the contest is to be begun, carried on, and decided, between that portion of his nature which allies him with God, and that which is common to him with the brute—between reason and appetite, between judgment and the passions, between conscience and self-will. Here he is to resign himself to the true, or to make himself over to the false, to cherish into life the principles of a happy immortality, or to rear up to a deathless supremacy those of spiritual disorder, misery, and desolation. Surely here is enough to environ human life with a sanctity which none should violate, unless in obedience to some higher law which leaves him no choice of an alternative. He who takes this view of man's life and destiny, whatever be his office, or under

whatever commission he may act, will tremble to cut short, in any case, this period of probation, until compelled thereto by dire necessity. Even in the administration of justice, it behoves him to bear in mind that his judgment is fallible, and that the sentence which consigns a fellow-mortal to the grave, is irrevocable; whilst, at the same time, it determines the period at which the man's destiny shall become fixed and eternal.

Now, just at this point, the spirit of Christianity appears to us to breathe into the mind counsels worthy of itself. It lays its hand upon the shoulder of the magistrate, and, pointing to the unalterable issues of his death-warrant, bids him pause. It does not tear up the commission with which Providence has entrusted him, nor ask that social order shall be sacrificed for a single life to be lengthened out a few years longer. But it charges him to be satisfied upon evidence which none can reasonably gainsay, that his commission cannot be carried out without resorting to so awful an extremity. Has he tried the experiment and failed? Is he building his conclusions upon grounds which cannot be shaken? Is he driven by the force of a necessity which he cannot control to avail himself of so desperate a remedy? Neither his own fancy, nor his fears, constitute a sufficient authority for taking away the life of a fellow-man, and,

unless he has good evidence for concluding, that to spare life in one instance would be but to sacrifice it in others, he is bound to abstain from the extreme exercise of his prerogative.

There is another view of the subject, scarcely less important. Christianity, as we have seen, surrounds human life with peculiarly sacred sanctions. To preserve them in unimpaired vigour should be the object of the civil magistrate. But what if, in his ill-considered efforts to do this, he should himself violate the sanctity of his trust? Every one knows the contagion of example, especially when exhibited in high places. It is impossible for human depravity to witness the violent severance of the tie which mysteriously links the body to the soul, even when effected by authority, and as a punishment of crime, without losing some portion of that instinctive reverence for life which it ought to be our first care to nourish and develop. God has planted in every human breast sympathies which must be trodden underfoot before murder can be committed; and capital punishments do not a little towards eradicating them. That act of civil government which strikes down the assassin, strikes down, by the same blow, some portion of the moral fence-work raised up by the Creator for the protection of man from the murderous passions of his fellow-man. The old stock is thoughtlessly rooted out in such man-

ner as to shed not a few of its seeds upon the neighbouring soil. An execution destroys, in many minds, the whole force of those lessons which Christianity inculcates respecting the moral grandeur of life. It is a sort of sacrilege committed under the auspices of authority. To those who witness it, it is a formal desecration of a thing proclaimed sacred, and serves to weaken, every time it is repeated, the horror with which we naturally regard the shedding of blood. Hence, the more frequently it is resorted to, the more frequent becomes the crime it is intended to punish; and the terror which it strikes into the mind of the bystander, is less powerful to check evil passions than the outrage done to his moral sentiments is to give them an unbridled license.

In an ordinary state of society, capital punishments, we are convinced, are not demanded by necessity. In many ways they foster with one hand what they suppress with the other. In their consequences upon the victim they extend farther than the human mind can penetrate. They are final and irremediable. Their influence is brutalizing. And we cannot doubt that, as the spirit of Christianity prevails, they will be discontinued, as repugnant to it.

No. XX.

SECONDARY PUNISHMENTS.

OFTEN as we have attempted to distinguish between the separate spheres of religion and civil government, it may be that, owing perhaps to a want of sufficient clearness in our statements, we have not succeeded in making the difference between the two completely understood. We therefore seize the opportunity afforded us by our present subject for putting into as compact a shape as possible a contrasted view of the main objects of each.

Christianity and civil government are both alike from God, and both bear upon them the stamp of His benevolent intentions to man. Assuming our race to have fallen into a wretched moral condition; each of these agencies has its allotted part to perform in raising it from the depths of its degradation. For the accomplishment of this desirable end, however, the precise work assigned to each, the instruments, modes of proceeding, and standards of reference resorted to, are, of necessity, essentially different. The object of Christianity is to implant the germs of true virtue,

that of civil government is to check the development of active vice. Christianity aims at character, civil government at conduct. The proper method of the one is persuasion, the proper method of the other is force. This exhibits to man, as a being possessed of intelligence, affections, and will, facts, doctrines, reasonings, and appeals adapted, when successful, to set him right in his motives—that puts in array against him laws, organizations of compulsion, and penalties, intended to keep within due limits all his actions. The characteristic of the first is that it is remedial; that of the last that it is preventive. The gospel breathes into the hearts of men living principles which, in proportion as they expand, constitute the power within, by which the passions, and with them the conduct, are controlled. Law, on the contrary, operates wholly from without, and, like an armed sentinel, guards the boundaries beyond which passion, in the guise of deed, is forbidden to pass. Christianity comes to society to administer to it, labouring under a virulent moral disease, the medicine which shall act upon the system slowly, perhaps, but surely, as an alterative, and seeks to get permanently rid of the evil itself by drying up the sources of it. Civil government does not even profess a cure; its business being merely to subdue by external applications those outbreaks of lawlessness which, if permitted, would destroy the possibility of

any steady internal remedial process. When nations shall have become thoroughly penetrated by, and imbued with, the Christian spirit, civil government will, to the same extent, be rendered superfluous. Till then, however, and in mercy to man, "the power" is appointed to repress that exuberance of wickedness which would else destroy society as an institution, altogether.

Each agency, therefore, must be judged of by its end. It is to the full as unreasonable to expect that civil government shall compass its object by the means appropriate to Christianity, as that Christianity shall work out its mission by the appliances of civil government. That process which is destined to kill wickedness in its very lair, and to convert the heart into the home of truth and love, is quite unfitted to deal with wickedness when it has left its cover to prey, by fraud and violence, upon universally admitted rights. Hence, the mistake of those who attempt to discard, as means of civil government, whatever is confessedly inappropriate, as means of spiritual renovation. Force, with a view to the last, Christianity repudiates, but with a view to the first, it admits and sanctions. Magistracy is a sort of *meanwhile expedient* to restrain men from doing all the injustice which they would do until Christianity shall have disposed them to the love of justice for its own sake by unfolding to them its

venerable and awful sanctions. If, then, the one is to be restricted in its selection of means to those which manifestly befit the other, it ceases to be an intermediate agency, it is virtually superseded, and all punishments, capital or secondary, down to the infliction of a paltry fine, must be regarded as disallowed by revelation. Such is the logical result produced by confounding the separate functions of Christianity and civil government, and referring the instrumentalities employed by each to one and the same rule.

It may be asked why, if the above representation be correct, we attempt to obtain a view of our present subject—secondary punishments—from the heights of revealed truth at all. We reply that civil government is obviously ancillary to religion, and that its arrangements, although entirely distinct from those of the Gospel, must, in some respects, be modified by it. The binding of a maniac lest he should do mischief, is altogether a different thing from the administering to him of those remedies which are intended to eradicate his disease; but it is clear that the physician who undertakes a cure may properly interfere to prevent the man being so bound as might, in his judgment, inflict unnecessary suffering, or impede and, perhaps, destroy the force of those remedial agents which he intends to make use of. So, Christianity, although it does not prescribe its own means beyond its own

sphere, may, with great propriety, pronounce upon the suitableness of the means resorted to by civil government for ends preparatory to its own more glorious triumphs. It may, and we think it does, imply thus much—that secondary punishments shall not be of a kind to aggravate the evil they are intended to repress; that they shall be as nearly as human wisdom can make them effectual for the purpose for which they are employed; and, that purpose being secured, that they shall not, in the spirit of vindictiveness, inflict more suffering than the safety of society requires.

Under the guidance, then, of the general principles and ultimate purpose of the Gospel, magistracy will seek to construct its system of secondary punishments with an anxious care to prevent the aggravation of that depravity the symptoms of which it is its duty to repress. In this respect, no government has been more heedless than our own. Whether in our jails, or penal settlements, all the gradations of vice have been indiscriminately heaped together, and left to putrify, until society is exposed to the chances of a moral pestilence. It needs but a superficial acquaintance with human nature to be aware that crime, like virtue, becomes more operative by unrestricted contact and communion with its like. Nor is this all. There are modes of inflicting suffering the direct tendency of

which is to brutalize and harden. The victims of their own lust having undergone penalties in this manner for their violation of social law are turned loose upon society more callous to every right impression, more deeply imbued with false and vicious principles, and both readier and more expert to put them into practice on the first opportunity that may present itself. All this evil results from contriving a system of secondary punishments without respect to the influence they may have upon a character already stained with crime. Governments have shrunk from the expense, the vigilance, and the trouble which a more wisely-ordered system would entail upon them, and have spent in military projects the money and the the care which ought to have been devoted to a more perfect administration of justice. Hence, in the nineteenth century, the question of secondary punishments remains "a problem yet unsolved;" and, to a great extent, the penalty which follows upon the perpetration of one crime, instead of impressing upon the mind of its victim a salutary warning that "the ways of transgressors are hard," ripens in him every tendency of a depraved nature, and sends him forth to the world again a confirmed villain.

Avoiding, therefore, as far as possible, and at any cost, every plan of secondary punishments which, by gathering evil into clusters, stimulates its inherent

tendency to fermentation, the next point which Government has to look to is that punishment, in as far as human wisdom can make it, shall be effectual. And here the object sought should rather be to deter than to reclaim. We do not mean of course, that the thorough correction of evil dispositions and crimes in those under conviction should be excluded from view in framing a system of punishment. All that we mean to affirm is that the safety of society should be taken as the real object at which effort is to be directed, and that all individual interests must be regulated by a strict reference to that. All suffering and privation is corrective ; but it may so happen that a corrective process may be carried on so leniently as to tempt large numbers into the vortex of crime that they may find in prison-discipline a refuge from the much more intolerable evils of every-day life. Punishment must be punishment, if the peace of society is to be maintained. The lowest and plainest diet consistent with the maintenance of sound health, the privation of all indulgence to an extent which does not interfere with sanity of mind, certainty in the execution of the penalty pronounced, and such humiliation throughout the term of a convict's imprisonment as shall impress upon his mind the idea that the commission of crime is a forfeiture, for the time being, of the rights of man, will only put human punishments upon a footing of

approximation, in kind, to those inflicted by Divine Providence. And, as in the last, there is no faltering, so neither should there be in the first. The visitation which follows upon the breach of law, having been first carefully proportioned to the offence, should be sure and unalterable, and should overtake alike the affluent and the poor. There is a strange partiality in the operation of our present system. Money fines for personal offences offer impunity to those possessed of wealth. The end of punishment is thereby lost. Society gains no additional protection against the heedless depravity of men who have the means to purchase emancipation from the effects of their own violence. All this should be put an end to. The sensibilities which stand between the transgressor and his temporary doom should be silent when judgment utters its decision. Religion sanctions nothing unreal, nothing merely nominal; and if offences are to be punished at all by the hand of civil government we must beware of indulging those feelings which might prompt us to convert punishment into a pretence.

There is yet another principle which affects the present question. Law must never become an embodiment of the spirit of revenge. So much suffering as is found by experience to be required for the safety of society, the criminal should in all cases undergo, but nothing more. It is not to be intensified for its

own sake, not to be regarded as payment in kind. Neither individually, nor socially, is the maxim to be admitted, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." In order to the existence of society, wrongs wantonly done to its members must be followed by punishment administered to the wrongdoers, else the very basis of the social system would be broken up, and mankind would sink into a state of helpless disorganization. But beyond what is due for the preservation of society, man is not constituted the judge of his fellow-man. The full complement of justice is reserved for the disposal of Him who is able to estimate motives as well as conduct. To us is assigned the task of meeting a dire necessity, as best we may. That necessity having been met, our allotted part has been performed. All severity beyond this is the indulgence of a malignant spirit. The grand motive of our laws should be the maintenance of order; and if, as a means to this, crime must be felt to entail misery, christian kindness will dictate to us that the measure of it to be allotted to the transgressor shall not exceed the demand made upon us by the one purpose we have to accomplish.

No. XXI.

COLONIAL GOVERNMENT.

WE have now passed under review all the legitimate *functions* of civil government which range themselves under the head "*domestic*." Those which relate to *Colonies* are the next which present themselves for examination. Whatever is peculiar in this branch of State administration, we may glance at in a single paper; it will be quite unnecessary to go over again that ground which is common to both home and colonial spheres of rule. As offshoots from a parent stem, colonies are subject to the same great principles of government which claim recognition from the mother country; as sustaining special relationships, they demand such special notice as will bring within view whatever pertains to them exclusively. Such notice we are about to give; and all the observations we deem necessary may be compressed into a few paragraphs.

Colonization, then, we take to be no part of the proper business of civil government. In every case, it should be the result of private enterprise—the natural produce of the overflow of industry and skill from

a densely-populated to a thinly-inhabited country. Neither diplomacy nor conquest can show any better warrant for the colonial possessions they give to a nation than the law of superior cunning or greater strength. Rights thus acquired are seldom exercised with a more than nominal reference to justice. What is born of sin never tends to righteousness. Man's follies, it is true, may be overruled for good. But no thanks to him. The good is brought about by an intervention in which he plays no intelligent part, and, meanwhile, it remains true, and he is destined to feel it, that evil never fails to beget something in its own likeness. That colonial territory may be justly obtained is certain; but we fear it is no less certain that were the title of Great Britain, for instance, to her numerous outlying dependencies to be traced up to its source, we should, in almost every case, be compelled to pass through a history of fraud, injustice, cruelty, and fiend-like atrocity such as few could read without mingled indignation and shame. Humanity, not to say Christianity, might well shudder at the bare recollection of the crimes which have brought under British sway so large a portion of the yet uncivilized world. With this protest against the origin of too many of our colonies, we hasten on to notice the light thrown upon the government of them by the principles of revealed truth.

Christianity, we imagine, might suggest to every thoughtful mind, the immense importance of those destinies the germs of which are planted in the bosom of every colony. These dependencies, for the most part, are infant empires—the comparatively helpless babyhood of civilized nations. Who can exclude from his contemplation of what they now are the thought of what, some two or three centuries hence, they must be, or of what, under proper management, they may be? From these several points of vantage ground, as we might make them, humanity is to take a fresh start towards perfecting its national development. As years roll on, civilization, in these new and remoter spheres, will put out its conquering energies, find scope for its boldest and most beneficent enterprises, build up new institutions, and prepare the way for those glorious triumphs of the moral over the material, which we are taught to expect will signalize the maturer age of this our world. And, forasmuch as the permanent character of infant nations, as well as of individuals, is chiefly formed in the earlier periods of their history, how awful the responsibility of those upon whom devolves their government through that most critical time! With what ever vigilant care does it become the mother country to refrain from sowing the seeds of those institutional vices which time has ripened into maturity at home, and which, in consequence of the extent to which

they have struck their roots into the soil, can be removed only at the expense of much which is really valuable! How much is there in the settled political organization of every old-world State which experience has proved to be an ultimate cause of weakness—a perpetual clog upon social and political progress! how much that, after centuries of trial, all unprejudiced minds agree had better never to have been! Where interests have grown up on the soil of now obsolete principles, and every spot of rottenness is made to fatten unnumbered vested rights, reform, more especially when it is real and searching, must needs proceed at a slow pace. Every empire which has reached its manhood is frequently held in check by this circumstance; and few indeed are the statesmen who professionally, if not in heart, have not bewailed the impossibility of setting aside some portion of the political mechanism frankly acknowledged to operate unjustly and injuriously with which they have to work—an impossibility attributed altogether to the fixity which an institution acquires by age.

And yet, so far as evidence is before us, no such care as the foregoing train of thought might serve to awaken, appears to have been cherished in relation to the government of our own colonies. The remote future is forgotten, and a just regard to posterity is overridden by the convenience of the passing moment. Every grey-bearded and now tottering anomaly in the civil rule of

the parent country, has a noisy brat, the very image of itself, in each of our colonial dependencies—every institution here, its counterpart there. Principles, universally admitted to be abstractly false, are nevertheless transplanted with as much care, and at as great an expense, as if it were believed that the future happiness of peoples were identified with their supremacy. Practices which nothing but long-established custom can shield from indignant execration begin, under the auspices of our rulers, a new career in our remoter territories. The same habits of extravagance, the same swarms of pensioned idlers, the same concentration of political power within few hands, the same tricks of taxation, the same hollow pretences which, alas! find shelter and tolerance at home, because we never remember Great Britain to have been without them, are transported by Government agency to our colonies, and derive fresh vigour from the change of climate. We are training young nations into a studious imitation of our every fault—poisoning their constitutions by compulsory inoculation—making infant prodigies of folly and wickedness, by foisting upon them organizations and laws which our own reason has condemned, and our sense of rightness has pronounced to be prejudicial to ourselves. And all this we baptize with the high-sounding name of “Colonial Government.”

But Christianity, as it seems to us, suggests another

principle, besides that we have just adverted to, which ought to have due weight in colonial administration. Its spirit is, in the highest sense, utilitarian and practical. It discourages vain-glory. It repudiates the sacrifice of real advantages and moral benefits to an empty fame. It counsels the doing of justice, even where the doing of it must entail upon us a loss of the world's good opinion; and, from end to end, it proceeds upon the importance of eliciting and exercising a spirit of self-reliance. Now, viewing the government of our outlying dependencies in the light of these and similar principles, to what conclusion are we conducted? Ought not our rule aim at preparing our national offspring as early as possible for self-government? Are there not social and moral advantages connected with independence which make it a precious boon to every people able to maintain it? Should we not, as provident parents, exercise to the full extent which prudence will warrant the powers of self-control which all bodies of men more or less enjoy? and encourage our colonies to feel their feet, and, as soon as may be, run alone? At all events, the retaining them under our authority, when it serves only to hamper their movements and repress their budding energies, and to yield to ourselves no other benefit than the ministering to our national pride by keeping up our fame, can plead no scriptural sanction in its favour. It is offering up some of the most valuable rights of humanity and some of its best

tendencies upon the altar of a beggarly vanity. We purchase a mean gratification of our selfishness at the cost of stunting the natural development of our own flesh and blood. We keep young nations swathed in our old-world institutions, and prevent their growth, merely that we may continue to call them our own. It is not in such a spirit that Christianity would have our colonies governed.

So long, however, as they continue under our sway, we are further responsible for protecting their aboriginal inhabitants, where any yet remain, from oppression by the Colonists. To extend over them the shield of defence, to mete out to them substantial justice, to guard most sacredly against the violation of their rights, to observe towards them a scrupulous truthfulness, and to inspire in them a reverence for law, order, and peace, by the uprightness of our dealings with them, is recommended by the most obvious propriety. How lamentably we have deviated from this standard is, unfortunately, too notorious. We are tempted to enlarge, but our limits forbid. We conclude, therefore, with this one observation—that Christianity nowhere gives countenance to the modern pretence that civilization may trample upon barbarism, strength prey upon weakness, or white complexioned humanity play havoc with black—"God has made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth." Woe be to the people who habitually disregard this truth!

No. XXII.

FOREIGN RELATIONS—WAR.

IT is not without a painful sense of responsibility, not until after a protracted, anxious, and scrupulously-conducted process of thought, that we proceed to a summary expression of the views we entertain on the main subject indicated by the title of this article—WAR. It would be an easy task—one, too, which would take along with it all the sympathies of our nature, to exhibit war in its hideous aspect, its blood-besmeared features, its demoralizing habits, and its deeds of violence, in contrast with the peaceful, benign and compassionate spirit of Christianity, and to ask with a show of triumph whether the two could ever be made to agree. The appeal would lie, in such a case, to our best and most cherished feelings, and the response would be condemnatory of war under any circumstances. There would still, however, remain that want of entire satisfaction which one inevitably feels where the conclusion at which he arrives has not received the “unfeigned assent and consent” of the judgment as well as the heart. Reason would bid us pause a moment and

inquire whether the kind of test we had employed for detecting the unjustifiableness of war might not with equal propriety be used to demonstrate the unjustifiableness of all violence in the protection of society, of all punishment involving a resort to violence, of all physical force, and ultimately, of all civil government. A convict at the hulks, a felon on the treadmill, a prisoner in his narrow and gloomy cell—each exhibits a picture of suffering, degradation, and restraint, revolting to the feelings which the gentleness of the gospel excites and encourages—but there are few who, simply on this ground, would hold themselves warranted in affirming that religion demands the instant abandonment of practices so abhorrent to its own spirit. The wickedness of man, unhappily, entails upon him not a few *necessities* which are themselves unquestionable evils, and which he is compelled to regard as penalties laid upon his race in consequence of its univereal disobedience. The question to be decided is, whether war, like prisons, instruments of punishment, and police agencies in general, can, under any circumstances, be referred to this class of necessities—and if it may, then the contrast between it, the result of evil passions, and Christianity, an emanation from the God of peace and love, does not furnish the true basis upon which to rest an unqualified condemnation of it.

Calmly, then, and without prejudice, let us betake ourselves to the examination of this matter.

We remark, at the outset, that every necessity imposed upon us by human depravity is itself an evil—an evil which, if the spirit of Christianity were universally triumphant, would be effectually put down. It may be useful to trace this thought, in as far as it is connected with our present subject, from its origin to its last result. It will tend greatly to keep us clear from extraneous considerations.

We glance, in the first place, at the mischief which civil government is ordained to meet. Few words will suffice to describe it. Selfishness, everywhere prevalent, seeking gratification regardless of the rights of others—sense of injustice, resistance, desire for redress, excited by the perpetration of wrong—hostile conflicts perpetually resulting from hostile interests—a general consciousness of insecurity—a prevailing habit of suspicion—every man disposed to look upon his fellow-man as a foe—social intercourse dwindling into narrower and yet narrower circles—confusion, anarchy, depopulation, destruction. Here, then, we have the origin of the first grand necessity—civil government. What does civil government involve? The delegation to a few, under whatever accompanying restrictions, of the exclusive right to organize and apply the physical force of the many for the protec-

tion of all. This is an undoubted evil—the elevation of a small proportion of our depraved race to a position of might which, besides ministering to their pride, tempts them, by the facilities it puts within their reach, to seek gratification at the expense of the governed. The relation of the ruled to their rulers is dangerous to both—but, dangerous as it is, it is necessary—and the evil must be submitted to, lest a worst thing befall us. It is, as we have said before, a *meanwhile* expedient to restrain the practical mischievousness of depraved human nature, until the gentler appliances of Christianity shall have healed its moral disease.

Now let us advance another step. Wickedness comes forth with violence to prey upon the weak. How is it to be met? Not by private individual resistance, but by authorized and organized public physical force. The subject must be defended from the wrong threatened him by a fellow-subject. Might must resist aggression upon the domains of right. Here again is a further evil, but it is an evil entailed by the necessity of the case. The employment of physical force against *man*, formed in the image of his Creator, even where it does not amount to the taking away of life, is an act which religion will deplore, but one, too, which religion cannot be said, in every instance, to condemn. The lesser evil is sanctioned as the means of preventing the greater—and violence

under the regulation of law is authorized to meet, resist, and overcome, violence originating and terminating in lawlessness. Thus far we *must* go in our concessions, or we must declare civil government which is an ordination of God to be unnecessary and opposed to the sanctions of the gospel.

A pace or two further forward, and we reach our conclusion. The armed depravity which strikes at the rights of the weak, and which meets, as an antagonist, public authority also armed, measures its strength, spurns all admonition, and coolly resolves upon effecting its object at the risk of life itself. What then? Must civil government thereupon break its wand of office, cast its books of law into the deep, and declare that wickedness has taken possession of a height from which it cannot, with divine sanction, be dislodged. If so, the institution is "a delusion, a mockery, and a snare." If this be true, then is it also true that, in proportion as scoundrelism overleaps all limit, human and divine, in the same proportion has Providence ordained that it shall remain unmolested. Reason, however, rejects the strange conclusion. The authority of civil government, exercised in the defence of its subjects, *must* be vindicated, or it must be surrendered at discretion to unrestrained ruffianism. The last alternative is tantamount to a formal retreat upon original anarchy; the first demands the application of physical

force up to the amount necessary to overcome resistance; in other words, it requires the sacrifice of life, if necessary, to prevent the greater evil, the sacrifice of public safety and social order. Conceding, then, the necessity of civil government, we are borne onward by irresistible reasoning to concede with it the authority of civil government to employ, in the fulfilment of its mission, force to the extent requisite to overawe and subdue the force levelled against it.

It appears, therefore, to us, perfectly conclusive, that the very institution of civil government carries with it Providential and Scriptural authority for shielding right from the lawless aggressions of might—for exhibiting the physical force necessary to the accomplishment of this purpose—for meeting and vanquishing ruffianism on its own chosen ground—for bringing into array, to protect the subject, against every organization of violence within its own territories, a counter organization to check and disperse it—and for charging the responsibility of the life lost in the faithful execution of its trust upon those who determine upon staking life in the pursuit of their unrighteous objects. Either we must admit this, or we must give up society as a quarry for the confederated villany which dares, as it frequently has done, to trample down all moral restraints, and hire its bloody services to private malice, to the utter disorganization of the social state. But if

we do admit this, what matters it to the argument whether the confederation be a domestic or a *foreign* one? By either the supremacy of law may be overturned, and the reign of anarchy may be proclaimed. To resist either is an evil which, although confessedly great, is less, by far, to be dreaded, than to suffer them to run riot unchecked. To put down both by such an amount of violence as the case really requires is one of those necessities imposed upon civil government by the same law which called it, at first, into existence. Supposing, therefore, the alternative to be the triumph of lawless violence over social order by civil rule, or war, with all its terrible inflictions, reason, Providence, and revelation require us to choose war, as the lesser evil—law, at any cost, rather than universal insubordination—government, at any sacrifice, rather than anarchy.

The foregoing train of thought has led us, spite of our opposing sympathies, to the conclusion, that the carrying on of war may become, in the last resort, a legitimate function of civil government. Nor does our acquiescence in this decision weaken, in the least degree, our detestation of it. Allowing it to be one of the terrible exigencies forced upon us by the depravity of our race, we are yet at liberty to let in the light of Christianity upon its manifold horrors, and to urge, by the strongest of all arguments, the unceasing and resolute cultivation of a pacific policy. Just as we recoil

at the sight of the felon's irons, or the convict's gloomy cell, and, whilst compelled to assent to the necessity of such appliances, retain our aversion to them as instruments of human suffering, so, reluctantly conceding to the State the right to protect its subjects from unprovoked aggression, by force of arms, if necessary—we would read the full meaning of the supposed necessity by the candle of Divine truth, and leave no suitable method untried of inspiring all men whom our words can reach with feelings of repugnance and disgust in the contemplation of war.

WAR! Who that has witnessed it in its loathsome and revolting details would not, if a single spark of humanity has survived the ordeal, deprecate all that may, by possibility, lead to it? What more fearful scourge can light upon our race? See how, upon its first appearance, myriads of households are invaded by dark forebodings, heart-wasting anxieties, hovering and spirit-killing fears! Where is he that can compute the sum of daily duties left unfulfilled, the amount of daily enjoyments spilt upon the ground, in consequence of the flurry and the apprehension excited by the unleashing of the dogs of war? In how many bosoms, at the first shrill cry of their hated voices, does tender-hearted charity faint away, and leave an open door for the entrance of malignant and cruel passions! What a strain does the fierce excitement of the public mind

bring to bear upon those gentler sympathies which Christianity has nourished! How many rules of inward morality give way beneath the pressure—and to what a vast extent is injury inflicted upon the whole existing breadth of spiritual sense and feeling! Follow an army in its march! Mark the recklessness of soul which spreads from man to man throughout the ranks! and, as the fear of death is gradually surmounted by pride and passion, see, too, how usually the fear of crime succumbs with it! Onward sweeps the walking pestilence, ruthlessly devastating the fields of patient industry, scattering the seeds of demoralization in countless families along its course, trampling down weakness without pity, and leaving behind it a broad wake of physical and moral ruin. And then, the battle! Who shall describe its hideous features? Involved in a cloud of dust and smoke, thousands of men are plying the engines of death. Maddened with the fever of the hour, and choked with thirst, they deal out and receive momentary destruction. Hot blood bounds through their veins, and makes them deaf alike to the moans of suffering and the promptings of compassion. The dying are beneath their feet—the dead are before their eyes—neither are regarded. To and fro rock the living billows of ruin, leaving the soil, wherever they meet, deluged with blood, and covered with the broken and battered wrecks of poor humanity.

The fortune of the day is decided—the smoke and dust clear away—and the setting sun, perhaps, or the rising moon, looks upon a spectacle of carnage which not the stout-hearted can contemplate without sickening horror and dismay. Such is war! Who would not labour with all his energies of body and mind to avert it, if possible?

But Christianity will instruct the civil ruler to look beyond the line of march and the field of battle; beyond the widowed and orphaned homes of bereaved survivors; beyond the scenes of time, to the realms of eternity. How many probations cut short! How many guilt-stained souls sent suddenly to their account! How many spiritual dooms irrevocably sealed! What a mass of human nature cut off from the transforming influences of faith, hope, and joy, and fixed, in the twinkling of an eye, in unchangeable depravity! Charity herself, with eyes blinded with tears, must needs contemplate this as the too certain result of the conflict we have described. And what is the council which Christianity offers? Without attempting to controvert the position that the overthrow of the tribunals of the law, the subversion of social order, and the consequent release from all civil restraint of individual selfishness, would entail miseries more extensive, more protracted, and more incapable of remedy than even these, it bids the magistrate, as he fears God and values

the happiness of man, to resort to every just expedient, in the discharge of his appointed mission, before he unsheaths the sword, and to see to it that his whole bearing is such as to absolve him from the awful responsibility of falling back upon so dreadful an alternative. Let but his heart purpose the protection of right, so far as in him lies, by a peaceful and conciliatory policy, and Providence will generally be found to co-operate with him in effecting his desire. And how much he may do, and how successfully he may labour, to render war all but impossible, it needs but a due sense of its unspeakable evils, to teach him.

If he heed the monitions of Christianity, he will studiously cultivate a spirit of peace in all his foreign relations. He will take care to trespass upon no rights pertaining to other states. He will deliver up to justice those of his own subjects who have inflicted wrong upon the lieges of another authority, and will make instant and spontaneous reparation to the outraged power. He will scrupulously abstain from meddling in the domestic affairs of other nations, and from setting up claims of his own to the humiliation or detriment of neighbouring peoples. Where obviously ill-treated, he will temperately seek redress through the constituted channels, receive every explanation with the charity that "believeth all things," and magnanimously overlook every offensive sign of

quarrelsomeness which does not amount to a positive denial of justice. He will encourage, by his commercial laws, the closest, the most frequent, and the most profitable intercourse between his own subjects and those of other states—and will thus diminish the chances of war by multiplying the interests which would plead against it. He will exhibit a manly reliance upon the justice and honour of foreign powers, and cautiously guard against irritating their pride by putting himself into defiant attitudes. He will recall and cashier all intriguing diplomatists. He will transact all his international affairs with scrupulous rectitude and transparent honesty. To all popular attempts to foster and develop the feelings of “universal brotherhood” he will lend his glad and decisive sanction. And if, in spite of his peaceful demeanour, causes of difference be rudely thrust upon him, he will ask the submission of those differences to the arbitration of some neutral authority, and where this request is conceded, will honourably abide the issue. A civil government thus acting, professedly with the view of avoiding the last alternative of war, would seldom or never be driven upon it. Without abandoning its post, or casting away the sword with which it is solemnly invested, it would sustain its own authority, protect its own subjects, and exercise over all other nations a moral influence which no open repudiation of the rights

and duties of self-defence could ever secure for it.
This appears to us to be the course prescribed to the
magistrate by the spirit of Christianity.

SUPPLEMENTAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTE ON WAR.*

WE cannot pretend to any surprise at finding that the article on *war* in our last paper has excited great concern in the minds of some of our most zealous and consistent friends. We could not but anticipate it from our knowledge of the views which they entertain; and had we felt ourselves at liberty to evade the question when it presented itself to us in serial order, we should have thankfully done so. We have already stated that all our inclinations lay athwart the path along which our reason, spite of ourselves, conducted us; and nothing would more thoroughly gratify and relieve us than the discovery of a flaw in the arguments we have employed.

We fear, however, that to some extent we have been

* This and the following paper were written to meet objections made by correspondents to the foregoing essay on War. We insert them here because such objections are likely to occur to most reflective readers, and, therefore, need to be replied to.

misunderstood. We wish, therefore, to state as clearly as we are able, the one and only consideration which prevents our condemnation of war under any, and all imaginable circumstances.

We admit, and have again and again insisted upon it, that Christ has laid down for his followers principles which, when carried out, are utterly opposed to war. We admit that the spirit and practice of war is inconsistent with the spirit and practice of Christianity. We admit that as the gospel prevails it will put an end to all warlike proceedings, and that prophecy distinctly points to this happy consummation as one glorious characteristic of its day of triumph. We believe it to be every man's duty to discourage a resort to war—and our readers will bear us witness that we have ever been forward to promote all practical efforts, whatever theory they might rest upon, which aim at the cultivation and extension of a pacific policy.

It may be urged that, holding such views of war, we are bound to exclude it altogether from the range of functions pertaining to the civil magistrate. It is not permitted us, we reply, even for the honour of Christianity, to take up a certain position upon grounds which, besides sustaining it, are equally powerful to overturn what inspired authority has pronounced to be a divine institution. Government is ordained of God, and it behoves us to be very careful how we adopt a line of

argument which is equally valid against *it* as against *war* itself. And yet the whole basis, structure, and functions of civil government might be condemned by an indiscriminate application to them of the precepts of Christ. Every degree of physical force in the maintenance of order—the constable's staff, the handcuff, the irons, the prison, the tread-wheel, the whip—all the appliances of magistracy for restraining and punishing lawlessness will be swept away by the precept, "If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also"—if that, and similar precepts, were intended to prescribe magisterial as well as individual duty. All these things are opposed to the spirit of Christianity. Civil government itself, as an organization of brute force, is opposed to the spirit of Christianity, and will one day, like the skin of a snake, be cast off as unnecessary by an enlightened, purified, and regenerated world. Meanwhile, however, evil men are to be dealt with, for their restriction, by *public authority*, on other principles than those of forgiveness; or otherwise, civil government is at an end.

Here, then, is the real difficulty. Christianity is from God—government also is from God; the one for the purpose of creating moral good, the other for the purpose of restraining actual and social evil; this for inspiring right, that for averting wrong. The objects, the spirit, the means of each, are not only different,

but seemingly opposed; and the first, as it prevails, will get rid of the last. The two, however, are now co-existent, and both have the highest sanction. But, since Christianity aims at something positive, a good in itself, it is permanent, and will be paramount. As civil government aims only at something negative and restrictive, it is destined to become superfluous and to cease. The "glory that excelleth," must ultimately overpower and abrogate the glory that is inferior, and the authority of conscience, universally prevalent, will supersede the authority of law.

Such being the state of the case, and the relationship of the two powers, the spiritual and the physical, whilst we admit that the first will eventually swallow up the last, we yet hesitate to pronounce a theoretical judgment upon the last, which, even by implication, reflects upon Divine wisdom in sanctioning its continuance; and we cannot conscientiously allow the validity of that reasoning which, in condemning war, condemns also the very rudiments of civil government. There are two ways of governing men. One, by setting the heart right by the power of truth—the other by restraining violent or unjust conduct by the power of the sword. The first is emphatically God's way, the second he permits meanwhile in mercy to man. Now although all the processes of the first are the very opposite of all the processes of the second, we hesitate to

call that wrong *in itself*, which continues under the express authority of God.

The whole extent, therefore, to which we carry our hesitancy in theoretically, and, on the ground of Christian precepts, condemning war, is that which, if we gave way, would logically involve also a condemnation of civil government as a Divine institution. We will not, we cannot, admit the right application of arguments which, if conclusive against war, are conclusive also against all the appliances of "the powers that be." That war *is*, perhaps in almost every instance which can be cited, a wanton and wicked proceeding, we allow, and, therefore practically, we never felt or feel the slightest difficulty in opposing it—that it must *needs be*, and in *its own nature*, wickedness, we cannot yet see, unless by admitting arguments which condemn civil government altogether. Practically, we are at one with the most zealous supporters of the Peace Society; logically, we differ from them. We dread war, as we dread pestilence; we hate it, because it is invariably allied with sin; we regard it as the greatest of evils. But we shrink from uttering concerning it a sentence which involves in our censure every act and development of an institution "ordained of God."

A WORD MORE ON WAR.*

A CORRESPONDENT whose letter is subscribed "Pacifcus," recalls our attention to the question of the essential unlawfulness of war. We had hoped to have done with the subject; and had pleased ourselves with the intention of using such influence as we possess in the cultivation of a spirit of peace. We accept, however, the strictures of our much-esteemed correspondent, in the spirit in which we are confident they were written, and we reply to them with reluctance, but with an unshaken faith in the soundness of the position we have assumed.

And first, "Pacifcus" misunderstands the basis of our argument, or he would not have mourned over us as deserting the ground of principle for that of expediency. We have never put the lawfulness of war upon that footing. We have never admitted the "damsel expediency" to be "the interpreter of God's plain laws." On the contrary, our whole argument is based upon a fear of casting contempt upon one of God's institutions. We could not see our way clear, nor do we now, to condemn war on grounds which equally condemn civil government.

The punishment of criminals, and the carrying on of

* See Note, p. 160.

war, we are aware, are no further analogous than in *this one respect*—that if the precepts of Christ are meant to prescribe the duties and objects of civil government, as well as those which arise out of *individual* relationships, both stand exposed to the same condemnation. “Resist not evil” is one of Christ’s commands—as definite, as imperative, as binding upon conscience, as is the law, “Thou shalt not kill;” and when “Pacifists” concede by implication that the civil magistrate does and may “resist evil,” but only so far as is necessary for “the security of society,” does he not perceive that we might wield against him much of his own complaint, ask him where is his faith, and lament over him as having fallen from the high ground of principle? Might we not array against him his own summary of conclusions, and especially the fourth in which he says, “No supposed case of danger to life and property, *or social order*, can lessen the duty of Christian men *to conform to the laws of Christ?*” We might inquire whether the functions of civil government are hemmed round by the “laws of Christ,” confessedly binding upon “Christian men?” And we might further demand whether the precept, “Resist not evil,” does not extend to the employment of anything beyond reason and persuasion to put it down, and whether consequently obedience to it by the civil magistrate, as such, is not an entire abrogation of his office.

We wish our friends would just take the “sermon on the mount,” and go through it, as a supposed exposition of magisterial duty, and if, when they have done so, they do not find that they have in theory abrogated an institution “ordained of God,” we are much mistaken.

We repeat, then, that the object of Christianity is not one and the same as the object of civil rule. The first is, to teach a sinful soul the way to purity and God; the other is, by physical force, to restrain evil, and render society a possible thing. You cannot regard the one as an exposition of the duties of the other. What a man is bound to do individually, government may be under obligation to leave undone—for example, provide for the support of religion; and what the Christian individually is bidden not to do—for example, resist evil, government is established by God for the express purpose of doing. What, then, is the conclusion that we deduce from this? The following—that precepts delivered by Christ to his disciples cannot be taken, nor were ever meant to be taken, as marking off the boundaries of all the legitimate functions of civil magistracy. Every one of them must else be considered plainly opposed to the teaching and will of Jesus, for he forbids all “resistance of evil.”

We put “resistance of evil,” and “war,” upon precisely the same footing, as far as the spirit and practice

of Christianity is concerned. Both are incompatible with the gentleness of the gospel, and both will be set aside in proportion as revealed truth prevails. Meanwhile, it is true, for inspired authority has declared it, that "the law is made for the unrighteous man," and that "'the power' beareth not the sword in vain."

Whether war is really necessary to the safety of States, whether it does not inflict more evil than it averts, and whether a peaceful attitude is not also the most prudent one, are different questions entirely; and we regret to learn that our "philippics against war" on any other ground than that which appears to us untenable "are of little worth." But though we were to find ourselves in company with the "Iron Duke," we cannot shape our reason at will for the purpose of getting out of his way; and even at the hazard of having our well-meant efforts undervalued, we shall continue, as we do this day, to help on, as we have ability, all benevolent attempts to render a resort to war impossible. It is one of the keenest trials to which our position exposes us, that we are compelled, at times, by faithfulness to our own conscientious convictions, to utter what we know will be painful to our most esteemed friends; and when such is the case, we have no refuge from the rebukes of those we love, but in a consciousness of our own integrity. In this matter of "war," as in many others, we may have erred in judg-

ment. But we have set forth the grounds of our conclusion, and to us it seems they can only be shaken by a process of argumentation which will upset civil government altogether. In very much of the letter of "Pacificus" we agree—its very severity savours of an earnest spirit which we delight to honour—but it proceeds throughout upon the assumption that war is unjustifiable in a government because the spirit of it is forbidden to an individual; and we say that if any such inference is correct, then the only consistent principle is that of William Lloyd Garrison and his disciples—namely, the principle of *non-resistance*.

No. XXIII.

INTERNATIONAL INTERCOURSE— DIPLOMACY.

THE last function of civil government which it is our intention to submit to the light of Christianity is that which concerns international intercourse, the modern method of discharging which is designated by the term diplomacy. It may be stated or occasional, ordinary or extraordinary, carried on by resident ambassadors, or by special plenipotentiaries. Our remarks will apply in part to both these classes of officials, but chiefly to the first.

The word "diplomacy," taking its meaning, we presume, from the usages of the class of functionaries whose peculiar work it describes, has come to mean a subtle, circuitous, underhand method of negotiation, whereby real purposes are shrouded in secrecy, and ostensible ones are made to appear in the guise of moderation and justice. The thing signified by it is a process of dexterous fraud reaching its ends by the forms of virtue. It is a system of international *espionage*, in which simulation is accounted justifiable in

proportion as it is perfect, and energy valuable in proportion as it is unseen. Its real objects are what we may characterise as exclusively governmental; its professed objects are national. Its chief attention, consequently, is given to questions which, however they may affect the position and influence of cabinets, or the interests of courts, are matters of no importance to the well-being of nations. It plays hazard, in the name of the country which it represents, for stakes which that country must pay when they are lost, but cannot share when they are won. It is, in a word, the political gambling which civil rulers carry on amongst themselves, with ventures taken from the people they represent. It is, therefore, the very nest of cunning, craft, and falsehood. The conventionalism of the system is so imperious, as to compel even honesty of purpose to bow the knee to it, and men otherwise honourable to wear without a blush the mask of deceit. It is the chief author and abettor of war. But for its collusive stratagems, Europe might do without a single military establishment. As the gamester is almost certain to become the duellist, so diplomacy is sure, sooner or later, to conduce to hostilities. Trace the wars of the last century to their source, and it will be found that they have one and all taken their rise in this region of political depravity.

International intercourse is one thing, the diplomacy

through which it is ostensibly carried on is another and a totally different thing. Two families are intimate; the several members of each come in frequent contact with one another; and each holds in its hands, to a considerable extent, the happiness of the other. But imagine them, under cover of seeking mutual advantage, to plant, each in the house of the other, one of its own members, to watch and to report all proceedings, what would be the certain consequences of such an arrangement? Suspicion, secrecy, intrigue, quarrel. No man in his senses could expect from it aught else. It is required to be shown wherein the interests of friendly nations require a resort to such a self-defeating absurdity, and in what respects we are justified in anticipating from it better results. The expedient of resident diplomatists appears to us to be based upon the assumption that nations must never confide in each other; and we are sure that what is begotten of suspicion invariably tends to misunderstanding and enmity. We concur in the wish expressed by Mr. Cobden, that nations may have as much, and governments as little, intercourse with each other as possible. It will be a great blessing to the world when the whole system of resident embassies is swept away; and when real differences between nations are settled by an entirely new method. Every principle of Christianity condemns the existing process.

Assuming for a moment, what we shall presently attempt to prove, that all the just protection from the aggressions of other States, which subjects can reasonably require from the civil government to which they pay allegiance, may be secured by other means than diplomacy, can there remain a valid reason for upholding a single relic of it a moment longer? We know of none which an enlightened people would consider conclusive; none whatever which Christianity would regard as establishing a necessary connexion between the system and the fulfilment of the legitimate ends contemplated by government as “an ordinance of God.” Viewing it in its actual working, we see nothing in it to approve, everything to condemn. The expense it entails is enormous. The idle habits it engenders are fraught with evil to society. Usually it proves a forcing-house for demoralization. It breeds all manner of hypocrisies. It meddles mischievously with affairs in which national safety has no concern. It fomented jealousies which, but for it, would never have seen the light. Its intellect is craft; its morality, double-dealing; its guiding principle, falsehood. Substantially, international intercourse proceeds without it, sometimes in spite of it, and although potent for evil, it is superfluous for good.

But how, it may be asked, are international differences to be otherwise settled? We reply, by a pro-

cess similar to that resorted to, for an adjustment of their disputes, by fellow-subjects. All that is needed is an international court, the judges of which shall severally represent their respective nations, shall be sufficiently remunerated and irremovable, who shall have cognizance of all violations of international justice, and whose awards shall be authoritative and final. If it be contended that its decisions would avail nothing, because it would be impossible to enforce them, we reply, that for all purposes of vital importance the moral force of public opinion would be strong enough to compel acquiescence in them. Why, even now, governments are obliged to cover all their designs by a show of reason and justice; and many are the temptations they forego, merely in deference to the universal sense of right and wrong. Every statesman knows that no amount of physical force can compensate for the utter absence of moral character and influence, and that to incur general odium and contempt is to invite ruin, even where not a hand is lifted up against him. Besides, the establishment of such a court, would dissipate every excuse for the further maintenance of military establishments, and the subjects of every government, assured of justice from without, would require the abolition of the means of tyranny within.

We have now, with all the conscientious care that

the importance of the subject seemed to us to require, gone through an examination of the objects, structure, and functions of civil government. We have viewed them, as we promised, one by one, in the light of the principles developed in divine revelation. We have given to the execution of our task a painstaking and impartial spirit, and have proceeded throughout under the influence of a firm resolution to deliberate before decision, and to utter our final judgment without regard to personal consequences. Little more now remains to complete our undertaking, and that little offers a somewhat more interesting field of observation. In the three remaining papers of the present series, we shall review the relationship of subjects to civil governments, and the christian duties which arise out of it, which, having been done, we shall hand over from speculation to practice, "The Politics of Christianity."

No. XXIV.

POLITICAL MONASTICISM.

“THERE is nothing new under the sun.” The most grotesque whims of the day are but old follies brought from the lumber-room of forgetfulness, and polished up for the present occasion. All things born of the human mind have lived before—lived, and, to outward seeming, died—but, sharing the immortality of the source from which they spring, perished only in the forms of their manifestation to reappear in some other guise. The volume of to-day is but a revised edition of that of yesterday. The thought which shoots up within us, and which we welcome as the exclusive product of our own intellect, is but the development of some seed dropped casually into our souls from plants which, long since, perhaps, flourished, blossomed, and decayed. Man’s mind is a soil which, whilst it slightly modifies, never essentially changes those principles the germs of which are sometimes of set purpose, sometimes by accident, cast into it. Every age has its prototype—every heresy, a progenitor in whose likeness it is born. No! “There is nothing new under the sun.”

“Avoid politics,” is the cant of no inconsiderable a section of the religious world. “That path is thickly strown with snares—venture not into it! The charms which line it, the pleasures which are to be found in it, the ends to which it conducts, however fair, are fallacious. Apples of Sodom, tempting to the eyes, but bitter to the taste, are the only fruit which Christian men can look to gather from that roadside. ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’ Worldly minds may heed worldly things. The cultivation of that inner life which is the breath of God, demands abstraction from the noise and turmoil of political contention. Shun it as you would shun enchanted ground!”

Aye! the soul of the monk is in the counsel—the same selfish pietism, the same cross-legged indolence of will, the same dreamy meditateness, the same preference of ease to conquest, the same spiritual voluptuousness, which in earlier days sought refuge from the temptations and distractions of worldly business in the solitude of the desert, or the cloister of the monastery. One sees in fancy the shaven crown, the cowl, the girdle, and the beads, of bygone times. Fancy, however, greatly deceives us. Look again! The dress is modern, precise, professional—the air authoritative, the gait officially majestic, and all outward appearances betoken one moving in a select and genteel circle of acquaintances. You would not, at first sight, take such

to be the present type of old monasticism—but, reader, in good sooth, it is nothing more nor less.

There is a sphere of duties and responsibilities, of things waiting to be done, of consequences claiming to be undone, of opportunities for good, of temptations to evil, and of useful exercise to every sentiment and affection of a noble, philanthropic, and heaven-born nature—a sphere which men have designated “political.” Have we not just explored it, noted its main features, and glanced at its claims? Is there not therein, we make bold to inquire, much work for embodied Christianity to do? mistakes to be rectified? thick jungles in which cruelty and rapacity hide themselves to be cut down? broad wastes to be redeemed? noxious swamps to be drained? pure and beneficent principles to be introduced? and rampant evils, the scourges of human peace, to be taken by the throat and destroyed? Who is to do this? If men claiming to have the mind of God are to shun this region, and leave it to the rank reproduction of its own vices, what hope is there of amelioration? Thousands are dying in consequence of the pestilential atmosphere which it exhales. What! is no Christian man to care for them? no interceding priest to swing aloft the censer of fragrant truth that the desolating plague may be stayed?

Out upon the sentimental pictism of these times,
which ever, like an ailing gentlewoman, stays within

doors, counts its own sighs, feels its own pulse, and nurses itself with an anxious and peevish care into a delicacy which makes its own life a burden! This outcast world of ours is not to be reclaimed by such boudoir agency. It needs something more manly, more heroic. Give us, O give us, instead of this queasy, lack-a-daysical, self-indulgent spirit, the faith which, seeing great dangers to be encountered for the sake of great good to be achieved, can sally forth in all weathers, and bear its message of truth into all quarters, more intent upon the fulfilment of its mission than upon escape from the perils to which it must needs expose itself! As, where contagious fever reigns, a courageous will may venture unhurt when shrinking timidity would have imbibed the poison, so may a resolute Christianity pass safely on its errands of love through a polluted moral atmosphere which would be all but fatal to susceptible and nervous quietists.

Reader, we have surveyed with you, in the light of divine revelation, the proper objects, structure, and functions, of civil government. Having done this, we ask with the more confidence whether all that fairly comes within this sphere ought not to be matter of deep and thoughtful interest to those who care for the well-being of their fellow-men? Can he who "loves his neighbour as himself" voluntarily exile

himself from this region? Ought not true religion to bestir itself here as actively, as systematically, as usefully, as elsewhere? Can we without cowardice and treachery lay aside any of the responsibilities of our position? Does it become us to estrange ourselves from anything which affects human progress? Let politics then have their due place in every Christian heart—not the highest, certainly, but one befitting their importance. Every sphere has its trials—politics as well as others; but they must be met and subdued, rather than avoided; for in this, as in other departments, a blessing is reserved for the man, not who escapes, but who “endures temptation.”

No. XXV.

EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE.

CAN we be far wide of the mark, gentle reader, in assuming that in days gone by, ere yet the hand of Time had brushed off from your spirits the fresh bloom of childhood, and when you were wont to heed more obediently the impulse of the moment than the counsels of prudence—can we greatly err in taking it for granted that among the sage maxims which parental vigilance inculcated upon your observance, sometimes, too, with a spice of reproof, might be found one which ran in this wise—“A place for everything, and everything in its place?” Little did you then suspect, mayhap, that underneath that well-worn admonition, experience would, thereafter, discover to you a rich mine of wisdom. And yet, has it not been so? Have you not observed how large an amount of power and enjoyment in all the ordinary walks of daily life is inseparably connected with an uniform attention to that maxim? In good sooth, it is one of those generalizations of practical prudence which seem to be applicable to all departments of conduct, trivial or important, individual

or national, and in its universal adaptability resembles the elephant's trunk which can pick up a pin, or tear up a tree by its roots. Were we disposed to expatiate upon it, we might contend, that it contains within it the germ of good government, and even describes with accuracy the gist of true religion.

Now, we intend to take that maxim as indicating the line of demarcation which encloses a large group of the duties which the existence of civil government imposes upon subjects. It might be imagined, at first blush, that the obligations which may be classed under the head of obedience and submission, present themselves first for consideration. But this is a mistake. We hold relationships which no claims of magistracy can dissolve—we are the natural guardians of rights which no authority of law can justly compel us to surrender. Government is only so far of divine institution as it moves within its legitimate sphere—and inasmuch as power in the hands of human nature is inherently and invariably disposed to trespass beyond the limits assigned to it, and the chief evils, moreover, which it inflicts upon society are perpetrated on the outer side of its own proper bounds, the primary duty which subjects have to perform towards the institution entrusted with the maintenance of social order is to keep it in its place, to resist its encroachments, to see to it, that in pursuance of its ends, it destroys none of

the rights of humanity, and meddles with none of the responsibilities which man owes to God.

We are aware that political theorists have assumed, as an axiomatical truth, that man, in passing over the frontier line of the social state, surrenders all his natural rights, and ceases, thenceforth, to hold one save from the hands of civil government. By what path of reasoning such writers have found their way to their conclusion, we are at a loss to conjecture. Thus much, however, we are bold to affirm—that a lower, meaner, more abject position, it would be hard to discover. What! Man has no rights but such as society may confer! What is society, but a community of individuals? And how is it possible for every component part of that community to be bereft of what it enjoys as a whole? The truth is, there is nothing whatever in the constitution of society, nothing in the nature or objects of civil government, which calls for this pretended resignation of personal rights. As members of the social state, we renounce nothing but the natural right of employing the physical force within our reach, in vindication of our just claims—and he who is a consenting party to the assumption by the magistrate of any further power or authority than that required for the public administration of justice, is guilty of treachery to the great family of man. Partly in ignorance, partly through cowardice, our forefathers

yielded up to government prerogatives which it behoved them to retain as inalienable—and we, their descendants, are compelled, in consequence of their weakness, to wring back, one by one, not without arduous struggles, what, as wearing the image of God, we claim as our own. Why, the political history of modern times is little more than a record of the efforts of subjects to force their rulers back within their legitimate sphere of action. All the splendid triumphs of modern times have been triumphs of repeal—and to undo what the civil magistrate has wrongfully and presumptuously done will furnish work enough for many generations.

The claim, however, which humanity has upon us, to resist the encroaching disposition of government—a claim, indifference to which would be treason to posterity—is small compared with that which is advanced by the relation in which we stand to the Supreme. The intrusion of civil rule within the realms of conscience—the demands of law where none but Divine authority can be fitly recognized—the daring ambition which essays to regulate the affairs of a “kingdom not of this world”—the impious and vain attempt to govern thought, faith, love, devotion, by applicances of coercion—Oh, who can estimate the wrong which these offer to the Father of spirits? But he who renders obedience is a partaker in sin

with him who exacts it. No man is justified in joining this conspiracy against the exclusive rights of Heaven, whether as leader or subordinate, as ruler or subject. This is one of the matters in which, in doubtful instances, loyalty to the Highest will regard resistance rather than submission, the safest side of error—and will avoid with becoming zeal, the “very appearance of evil.” For, if concern for the honour of our Maker fail to engage our stern and steadfast repudiation of magisterial authority in spiritual affairs, observation and experience of the terrible woes and deep degradation it has brought upon our race, might suffice to rouse us into active moral antagonism. Five-sixths of the suffering which subjects have, erewhile, endured at the hands of government, have been the direct result of employing the sword of Cæsar in pretended support of the claims of God—and, to this hour, much of our own political disadvantage is bound up inseparably with the system which assigns to the magistrate the care of religious worship and instruction. The sin still continues to yield us bitter fruits—amongst which not the least is, a partial paralysis of voluntary zeal, and a canker at the root of our religious faith. The deadly injury we sustain is but the shadow of which impiety is the substance.

We urge it, therefore, as the primary duty which subjects owe to civil government, to keep it, if possible,

by the active use of all moral means of resistance, in its proper place, to guard from its encroaching tendencies, the clear rights of humanity, and the high prerogatives of God. They are bound to set their face as a flint against all proposals and practices which would enlarge the original commission with which the magistrate is invested. To restrain evil doing is his business, and to this end organized physical force is placed at his command. All his attempts to pass beyond this well-defined line of action ought to excite opposition, and draw forth remonstrance. And it is comparatively easy as well as incalculably important, for patriotic and intelligent vigilance, to prevent the evil in the first stages of its development. It may seem trivial in its beginnings—scarcely worth resistance—but wise men will resolve their doubts, as Brutus resolved his:—

“ And since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing it is,
Fashion it thus ; that what it is, augmented,
Would run to these, and these extremities :
And therefore think it as a serpent's egg,
Which, hatch'd, would, as its kind, grow mischievous ;
And kill it in the shell.”

No. XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

MANY of our readers, we fear, will think we have detained them too long upon the ground marked out by the standing title of the present series of papers, and will feel it a relief to be dismissed to some other topics. We can sympathize with them. We have too often ourselves experienced weariness from looking at many illustrations successively, of one or two leading ideas, to complain of others for being similarly affected. Who, for example, has ever gone through an extensive gallery of portraits, without catching himself, before he has inspected all of them, in a yawning mood? Such variety as individuality of expression can impart, he may have had all the benefit of—such monotony as sameness of class invariably produces, he is also pretty sure to have felt. The eye of an artist may discover pleasure in mere difference of style and treatment; the public generally will see little more than a constant repetition of human countenances. So may it have happened, we have sometimes imagined, with our disquisitions on the Politics of Christianity, for, although

no murmur has reached us, thanks to the admirable patience of our readers, we have not the vanity to suppose that these papers will fare better than many other things, whose excellence in their way is unquestionable. Yet before we take a final farewell of the theme upon which we have so long lingered, we would take occasion to express an earnest hope that our readers will not lose sight of its pervading moral. It has been our special aim to induce them to look upon the world of politics from the commanding heights of Christian principle, and to survey regions ordinarily seen only as they loomed through the mists of party conventionalism, in the clear sunlight of divine revelation. Looked at from such a position, are they not, we ask, worthy of some attention? Do they not invite, and would they not repay, careful study? Is there aught in the science of civil government which puts it beyond the reach of the elevating and purifying influences of the gospel of peace and love? And, albeit we cannot identify this institution with that which is exclusively spiritual, nor confound a system set up for the purpose of restraining evil actions, with that which was given to create pure and virtuous affections, and to inspire right principles, are we not taught to expect that the spirit of the one may be gradually and permanently modified by being constantly exposed to the refracted rays of the other? When good men

carry their religion into their politics, corruption and oppression will be compelled to quit the ground. They have held it unabashed, until now, only because Christian patriotism has been absurdly identified with tacit acquiescence in "things as they are."

We have laboured to little purpose, if the light we have attempted to kindle penetrates no further than to the understandings of our readers. We revert to language used by us on another occasion, as well fitted to express our idea of their duty at the present time. All truth is in order to action. Opinions are nothing save as they are reduced to practice. Principles possess no worth till they come to be applied. Providence bestows nothing upon us in vain. Childhood is not endowed with all the powers and qualifications which belong to maturity, simply because childhood could find no profitable use for them. Propensities and talents, according to God's law, unfold themselves when they are wanted; and the mere fact of their existence in any being, implies the obligation to employ them. Let this be borne in mind, and let it be also remembered that as it is with individual, so, in the long run, it will be with States. Enlightened public opinion, in the very nature of things, looks towards enlightened public conduct as its end. The blossom is meant to ripen into fruit, or no blossom would have appeared. Thought, unimpeded by conventional counteractions,

must tend, by an inherent law of its being, to take visible form, and become deed.

“Heaven doth with us as we with torches do ;
Not light them for themselves ; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues.”

We long to see a new school of politicians—a school composed of men who resolutely eschew all party trickery, renounce all injustice, and who believe it possible to carry on the great affairs of civil government in harmony with the spirit of revealed truth. We have little hope for our country but from the growth of such a body in its midst. To contribute our little quota towards the formation of such a school, the present series of papers has been written ; and we would cherish the hope that our idea will one day be realized, and that our efforts, imperfect as they are, have not been thrown away. Meanwhile, we heartily thank our friends for the patient attention they have vouchsafed to us in this matter, and in quitting this formal discussion of “The Politics of Christianity,” content ourselves with expressing our hope that the principles laid down in the foregoing papers may one day constitute the governing principles of our fellow-countrymen.

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